UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# THE USE OF EUPHEMISMS AND TABOO TERMS BY YOUNG SPEAKERS OF RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH

by

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the differences in the use of euphemisms and taboo terms on the topics of sex and death by speakers of Russian and English. The survey instrument used was an opinion survey. Four general hypotheses were tested: 1) that female speakers are more inclined than male speakers to avoid the use of taboo terms; 2) that female speakers are likely to find the use of such taboo terms more offensive than male speakers are; 3) that both male and female speakers are more likely to use taboo terms in informal rather than formal situations; and 4) that both male and female speakers are likely to find the use of taboo terms less offensive in informal situations. The first two hypotheses were not supported by the results, as the males and females avoided taboo terms at the same frequency, and perceived the offensiveness of such taboo terms at the same level. The third hypothesis was supported, while the fourth hypothesis was supported for the sex terms, but not the death terms. These results indicate that the formality of a situation plays a greater role than gender when it comes to word choice and perceived offensiveness.

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Use of Euphemisms and Taboo Terms by Young Speakers of Russian and English submitted by Carole Teresa Greene in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Slavic Linguistics.

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John T. Hogan

September 21, 2000

## DEDICATION

To my parents,
for their love and support.

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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Taboo, Dysphemisms, Euphemisms

> Language is used to avoid saying certain things as well as to express them. Certain things are not said, not because they cannot be, but because 'people don't talk about those things'; or, if those things are talked about, they are talked about in very roundabout ways. In the first case we have instances of linguistic *taboo*; in the second we have the employment of *euphemisms* so as to avoid mentioning certain matters directly. (Wardhaugh 1986: 236)

### TABOO

What exactly does the word 'taboo' mean? It is of Polynesian origin, derived from the word *tabu*. (Radcliffe-Brown 1939: 5) This word came into the English language as a result of Captain James Cook's voyages in 1777. That year Captain Cook entertained on board his ship local chiefs from the Tonga Islands, yet when dinner was served no one sat down to eat the meal. Cook wrote, "On expressing my surprise at this, they were all *taboo*, as they said, which word has a very comprehensive meaning but in general, signifies that a thing is forbidden." (Webster 1942: 3)

Historically, tabooed words and phrases were not completely banned from the language, but rather were "utterable under certain special conditions, in given circumstances or by particular persons." (Sagarin 1962: 26) Today in North America such words include dirty words, four-letter words, or come under the general heading of obscene language. (Sagarin 1962: 31) According

to anthropologist James Lewton Brain, the 1960's and 1970's saw a great increase in the United States in the use of such obscenities by the middle classes, with the 1970's showing a marked increase in their use by educated women. (Brain 1979: 83) In reaction to public shock at women's use of obscenities, Brain writes, "Obscenity is intended to be shocking; it becomes doubly shocking from someone assumed to be 'pure'." (Brain 1979: 85) By using such obscenities and thereby breaking linguistic taboos, people, and especially women, are showing their freedom from restrictions, or are exposing the taboos as "irrational and unjustified." (Wardhaugh 1986: 236)

Wardhaugh states that such linguistic taboos are universal, yet he does not explain *why* they are universal.

> Each social group is different from every other in how it constrains linguistic behavior in this way, but constrain it in some such way it certainly does. Perhaps one linguistic universal is that no social group uses language quite uninhibitedly. (Wardhaugh 1986: 238)

Brain attempts to explain this human tendency towards linguistic constraints. He writes that all words are symbols, or "arbitrary sounds used by one society to represent things and concepts," which we, as humans, need to categorize and classify. (Brain 1979: 12) When a word does not fit our normal way of classification, our reaction varies "from amusement to a feeling of danger or outrage." (Brain 1979: 12-13) Words which incite the latter emotions are tabooed. Edward Sagarin also discusses the strong emotional impact that people have to "dirty words." He writes, "Our society has developed what may be called, I think, 'word fetishism.' Just as fetishes of many kind are the source

of neurotic behavior, so word fetishes cause unhealthy emotional responses." (Sagarin 1962: 9-10)

Sagarin, too, notes that modern man violates taboos with full abandon. Words that were previously unprintable now appear in books, dictionaries and magazines; words that were unutterable are now said on television, in polite and mixed company, and in the college classroom. (Sagarin 1962: 30-31) Sagarin can perhaps be criticised for stating that taboos today are violated with "full abandon;" although tabooed words are being used more freely, there still exist some words that are not used in print or in speech, or at least are used less frequently.

> Tabooed words have by and large ceased to be part of the superstitions of society; they are rather a part of the shadow language of slang or argot, that ranges from the somewhat ungrammatical to the completely improper, from the colloquially quaint to the pejoratively dirty. (Sagarin 1962: 31)

## EUPHEMISMS

> If, as [W.J.] Burke has stated, slang was invented as an antidote to grammar, the euphemism, I would add, was in many instances invented as an antidote to slang. (Sagarin 1962: 114)

Euphemisms are "mild, agreeable, or roundabout words used in place of coarse, painful, or offensive ones. The term comes from the Greek *eu*, meaning 'well' or 'sounding good' and *pheme*, 'speech.'" (Rawson 1981: 1) According to Wardhaugh, euphemisms are more obvious in our society than taboo words and expressions. "Euphemistic words and expressions allow us to talk about

unpleasant things and 'neutralize' the unpleasantness, e.g., the subjects of death and dying, unemployment and criminality." (Wardhaugh 1986: 237) In other words, we use euphemisms to lessen the offensiveness of certain disagreeable subjects; we talk around a subject instead of naming it directly. Hugh Rawson, in A Dictionary of Euphemisms & Other Doubletalk, takes the use of euphemisms a step beyond avoiding "unpleasantness." They reflect our inner anxieties, fears and shames. (Rawson 1981: 1)

> Many euphemisms are so delightfully ridiculous that everyone laughs at them... Yet euphemisms have very serious reasons for being. They conceal the things people fear the most - death, the dead, the supernatural. They cover up the facts of life - of sex and reproduction and excretion... And they are embedded so deeply in our language that few of us, even those who pride themselves on being plainspoken, ever get through a day without using them. (Rawson 1981: 1)

The use of euphemisms corresponds to a choice being made by the speaker to avoid the embarrassing or frightening aspects of taboo words; as Brain states, euphemisms have been "filtered by the cortex." (Brain 1979: 91-92) Euphemisms are almost always longer than taboo utterances - they consist of more sounds, more syllables, even more words - and therefore represent more effort to choose and then produce. They are longer than taboo words "partly because the tabooed Anglo-Saxon words tend to be short and partly because it almost always takes more words to evade an idea than to state it directly and honestly." (Rawson 1981: 10)

## 1.2 Two Tabooed Subjects: Sex and Death

One subject area in which both taboo words and euphemisms abound is sex. Sagarin uses sex terms as an example to classify words into four categories. The first category consists of terms from "the official and accepted language," those usually used in medical circles. They include such expressions as *copulation*, *cohabitation*, and *fornication*. He writes, "because there are other forms of speech at hand, they somehow appear to be prudish, clumsy, or long, even when they are easy to say and rather short." (Sagarin 1962: 45) The second category consists of "longer but less technical words and phrases." These terms are universally understood and accepted, yet Sagarin feels they are clumsier than the terms in the first category. He poses this situation: "It is difficult to imagine a man sitting with his ladylove and asking her 'Honey, will you have sexual intercourse with me now?'" (Sagarin 1962: 46)

The third category is one of special interest to this work, "euphemisms and evasions." These are terms used to avoid direct mention of a process or object; "the concept is implied, but the harshness is somewhat alleviated by the linguistic form. Euphemism seems to be an almost universal phenomenon." (Sagarin 1962: 46) This group is very large, consisting of such terms as *to sleep with*, *to do it*, and *to make love*. The final category includes taboo words, or so-called "dirty words." Sagarin states that these words are the most common, the harshest, and the easiest to say because they are simple, clear "four letter" words. Dirty words "are necessary to the vocabulary of

those whose total range of word power measures only a few hundred, and those for whom the number soars to tens of thousands." (Sagarin 1962: 48) Two examples from this category are *screw* and *fuck*.

Categories three and four, consisting of 'euphemisms' and 'taboo words' respectively, outweigh the first two categories by far in both number and usage. While euphemisms cushion the harshness of a thought, taboo words increase its hostility or harshness. Sagarin writes, "for this I had thought of coining the word cacophemisms, until I learned that [A.W.] Read had suggested it many years ago, together with an alternate choice, the coined synonym dysphemisms." (Sagarin 1962: 114) The French writer Carnoy captures this opposition well: "Dysphemism is a stimulant, whereas euphemism is a sedative." (Sagarin 1962: 115)

The previous paragraphs explain *how* to classify sex terms into different categories, but they do not explain *why* there are such categories in which they can be placed. Brain explains why the subject of sex is taboo, and therefore why euphemisms are needed to "cushion" the issue: "There is tremendous cultural variation in human attitudes to sex...but it is my contention that in every culture we find anxiety surrounding sexuality." (Brain 1979: 233) Such fears and anxieties about sex arise from various beliefs and misconceptions. One is the belief that sex is dirty:

> It is clear that humans standing erect must cleanse themselves; they also have to control their excretion of feces and urine to be human as we understand the word. Most importantly of all, they have to be *taught* to do these things. There is little doubt that this is where humans

> universally acquire the idea that sex is "dirty." The penis and vagina are at one and the same time the organs of sex and of urination; the anus is situated nearby. (Brain 1979: 58)

Another reason the subject of sex is taboo is a lack of sexual knowledge. John C. Messenger studied the people of Inis Beag in western Ireland and found them to be "one of the most sexually naive of the world's societies." (Brain 1979: 31) Residents suffer from a fanatical prudishness, a terror of nakedness, and a "fear of masturbation, body exploration, and any words referring to sex - all are 'severely punished by word and deed.'" (Brain 1979: 31) While most cultures have anxieties regarding the language of sex, this culture also has an intense fear of the act itself; of course they will need euphemisms to broach the subject of sex.

In his book Don't Do It!, Philip Thody discusses how anxiety concerning sex even reaches the scientific realm of anthropology. He quotes anthropologist Don Kulick in Sex, Identity and Erotic Subjectivity in Anthropological Fieldwork:

> The biggest taboo is the sexuality of the fieldworker. What one is supposed to do about sex for a whole year, far away from one's normal life and sexual partner(s) is never touched on in courses on anthropological fieldwork... Anthropology traffics in sex; it absolutely revels in it - but only as long as the sex being scrutinised is *their* sex, the sex of the Other, the sex of the people we study. (Thody 1997: 71)

Studying and discussing sex is acceptable when it is impersonal and for scientific purposes; however, when it becomes a personal discussion the subject is again off-limits or 'taboo.' Sagarin also notes that while such

unprintable words are now found in books and other publications, they are "still often omitted from scientific and historical discussions of folklore, ethnography, linguistics, and even from discussions of obscenity." (Sagarin 1962: 30-31) When the article "A Systematic Approach to Russian Obscene Language" (Dreizin and Priestly 1982) was accepted for publication, the editors Durovyc and van Holk felt it necessary to justify the inclusion of such an article in their journal *Russian Linguistics*.

> Since, however, several educated Russian native speakers confirmed that such or similar texts are indeed imaginable in extreme situations, we have decided to publish this article as appropriate for the scope of our journal...the counter-indicating cultural tradition notwithstanding. (in Dreizin and Priestly 1982: 233)

Thus, the taboo of sex is so deeply engrained in all humans that even in the name of science and research it is difficult to confront the subject directly. Brain sums up this absurdity quite nicely: "When one considers that only through sexual activity did any of us get here and the extent to which most people think about sex, this deletion from public mention of such an overwhelming important part of human life is truly astounding. It is certainly an extent of the fear we feel." (Brain 1979: 37)

Another taboo subject area worthy of discussion is death. In Euphemism & Dysphemism, Keith Allan and Kate Burridge frankly state "death is a fear-based taboo." (Allan and Burridge 1991: 153) They give four reasons outlining why death taboos are motivated by fear: (1) Fear of the loss of loved ones; (2) Fear of the corruption and disintegration of the body; (3) Fear of

what follows the end of life, the unknown; and (4) Fear of malevolent spirits, or of the souls of the dead. (Allan & Burridge 1991: 153) "Many people have remarked that death has now become the great taboo subject - the 'unmentionable' in contemporary polite society." (Allan and Burridge 1991: 157) Yet death is a fear that every single person must face.

The fear of death is universal among humans. We attempt to banish disease and death to hospitals, yet this is an unsuccessful deception. (Brain 1979: 27-28) Even as young children we are aware of our own mortality; through the average 10,000 deaths seen on television before the age of 18, through the knowledge that meat comes from dead animals, through the sight of roadkill on the highways, and so on, we are all aware of death. (Thody 1997: 147; Brain 1979: 27-28)

> We may partially repress our fears of death or joke about it to cover our terror. Freud first pointed out that we laugh most at those things we fear most. If you want to get people's attention at a party or the interest of students at a lecture, just mention death, sex, or incest.
> (Brain 1979: 26-27)

We may apply Sagarin's classification of sex terms to death as well. The first category of "official and accepted" language would perhaps include *perished* and *expired*. These terms seem somewhat clumsy and awkward when discussing a person's death. The second category of "longer but less technical terms" does not seem to be a large category for death, but could include *ceased to exist*. Euphemisms in the third category are numerous, including *quit this world*, *passed away*, and *lost his/her life*. Brain notes that "in the field of

death euphemism becomes rampant - a sure indication of where our greatest anxiety lies." (Brain 1979: 94) The final category of taboo words is also large: *popped off*, *kicked the bucket*, and *bit the dust* to name a few.

## CHAPTER II

### 2.1 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to determine the differences in the use of euphemisms and dysphemisms concerning the taboo subjects of sex and death by speakers of Russian and English. The study will focus primarily on three comparisons, those of males vs. females, of FORMAL vs. INFORMAL situations, and of Russian vs. English-speakers. The first two comparisons will be analyzed within each language, as well as across the language groups. The third will include comparisons that are non-gender specific.

This study was developed with four general hypotheses in mind: 1) that female speakers are more inclined than male speakers to avoid the use of taboo words and phrases, when discussing the subjects of sex and death; 2) that female speakers are likely to find the use of such taboo words and phrases more offensive than male speakers are; 3) that both male and female speakers are more likely to use taboo words in INFORMAL rather than FORMAL situations; and 4) that both male and female speakers are likely to find the use of taboo words less offensive in INFORMAL rather than FORMAL situations.

The first two hypotheses are based on society's assumption that women are "pure," as noted by Brain, and therefore are more likely to avoid what they consider "offensive" words. The second two hypotheses are based on the fact that "no social group uses language quite uninhibitedly," as stated by Wardhaugh; FORMAL situations will therefore be more linguistically inhibiting than INFORMAL situations.

No general hypotheses concerning the differences between Russian and English speakers were predetermined. As noted in this chapter, taboos are universal, and therefore the above four hypotheses may apply both to Russian as well as to English. However, societies differ, and as noted above in the case of Inis Beag, some have stronger taboos than others. Therefore, the two language groups will be compared to determine if any language-specific differences do exist, reflecting these two societies.

## 2.2 The Experiment

The experiment consisted of an 'opinion survey' distributed to native English speakers and native Russian speakers in the Edmonton region. Informants were found through contacts in the community: through friends, acquaintances, and students. A total of eighty-two surveys were distributed, thirty-three to Russian speakers and forty-nine to English speakers. In spite of repeated attempts to persuade "delinquents," only twenty-six informants returned completed surveys. Of the sixteen English informants, eleven were female and five were male. The ten Russian informants consisted of five females and five males. The targeted age group included eighteen to twenty-five year olds. Of those responding, the age range was nineteen to twenty-five. All the Russian-speaking informants were born in the former Soviet Union and now reside in Canada. Their length of residence in Canada ranged from nine months to eleven years, with an overall average of five years. The significant amount of time spent in Canada by some of the Russian-speaking informants

may have influenced the results found in this study. However, these informants continue to use Russian at home from eighty to ninety-five percent of the time, and with their friends from ten to eighty percent of the time, while the language used at school and at work is English one hundred percent of the time. All the English-speaking informants were born in Canada. No other interesting differences among the subjects were apparent.

Both the English and Russian versions of the survey were made up of four parts (labeled A, B, C, and D), each part consisting of four sections (labeled 1, 2, 3, and 4), for a total of sixteen tasks. The survey instruments are provided in Appendix A. Parts A and B were dedicated to the topic of death, A outlining an INFORMAL situation and B a FORMAL situation. Parts C and D consisted of the same kinds of situation, but dealt with the topic of sex. The wording was altered appropriately for male and female subjects. In each part the informants were given a list of terms pertaining to the specific topic outlined in the situation, i.e., sex or death. The number of terms on each list ranged from sixteen to twenty-two, and were compiled from various Russian and English dictionaries and thesauri. While all the sex terms are more or less synonymous to having sex, and all the death terms are more or less synonymous to dying, the meanings are not exactly the same. However, all terms were included to make the list as complete as possible, and the semantic differences were therefore not taken into account. (See page 83 in the conclusion.)

With these terms, the informants were asked to perform four tasks

each with respect to both the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. In Section 1, the informants were asked to add any terms that were not on the list, but which they would use in the outlined situation. In Section 2, they were asked to rank their usage of each term on a scale of 1 for *most frequently used* to, for example, 22 for *least frequently used*. Section 3 consisted of a scale of 1 to 5, from *always* to *never*, and the informants ranked their frequency of usage for each term. In Section 4, the informants ranked each term based on whether or not they felt it was offensive on a scale of 1 to 5, from *no way* to *definitely*. Each survey took approximately thirty to sixty minutes to complete. As explained in Chapter III, the results from Section 1 are minimal and are ignored here. For brevity, the other three tasks are given the following labels below: Section 2 - Ranking task; Section 3 - Frequency task; and Section 4 - Offensiveness task.

To analyze the data, both the list of sex terms and the list of death terms were divided into three groups. More meaningful patterns could be discerned by analyzing the terms in groups, rather than comparing each lexical item separately. Three native English speakers and two native Russian speakers were consulted to determine the appropriateness of these groupings. Labels for the three groups used are: NEUTRAL terms; STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms; and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms. It should be noted that these are somewhat arbitrary labels. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms are, of course, also *stylistically coloured*; therefore, the label STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED refers to those terms which are *stylistically coloured*

*and neither pejorative nor obscene.* While these groups do not correspond perfectly to Sagarin's classifications, I submit that they are nevertheless relevant. The NEUTRAL grouping used in this study includes Sagarin's *euphemisms*, but only those found in everyday usage, such as *to pass away* for death and *to sleep together* for sex. This grouping also includes the most basic, simple terms for sex and death, such as *to have sex* and *to die*. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED grouping partly covers three of Sagarin's classifications: *official language*; *longer but less technical terms*; and *euphemisms* (those in less common usage and therefore more colourful to the speaker's ear.) Some examples are *quit this world*, *expired*, *copulated*, and *performed the marriage act*. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE grouping directly corresponds to Sagarin's *taboo* or *"dirty words,"* referred to also as *dysphemisms* above. Examples for this group are *croaked* for death and *screwed* for sex. Full lists of these groupings are provided in Appendix B.

### 2.3 Suggested Improvements for the Experiment

To improve this experiment, I offer several suggestions. First and foremost, it is important to get enough informants for the implementation of statistical inference techniques. It is also important to have enough informants that belong to different categories, in order to find various potential differences. For example, the informants can be analyzed based on age, social class, and/or religious views (if it is not intrusive to determine such views.) Without surveying a cross-section of the population, the results do not produce

a description of how language is used as a whole. In this study, the age group was limited to a very small range, and other potential variables were not considered; therefore, the results were not generalizable to the whole population. As well, by limiting the age, the results do not show how language use differs between the generations.

In regards to the layout of the survey, I think it is important to specify the situations more precisely. Not only the hearer but the identity of the third person should be specified, indicating whether the speaker and hearer are discussing a mutual friend, a relative, or an enemy, for example. Another possibility is to indicate that the speaker is speaking about himself or herself, or about the hearer. As all the situations in this study involved male-only or female-only situations, I suggest including mixed gender situations. Such variations would likely affect the choice of terms and the perceived levels of offensiveness of the terms. It is also important to specify what is meant by *offensiveness*, for instance whether the speaker is offended, or if the speaker feels the term would be offensive to his or her age group, friends, or parents. Finally, I would alternate the order of the terms as they are given in the surveys, by counterbalancing or reordering the words, so that the carry-over effect is minimized.

## CHAPTER III

## THE ANALYSIS

For both the topics of sex and death for the Russian males, the Russian females, the English males, and the English females, I will compare the informants' responses in the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. The number of informants was too small to give the results statistical reliability. The INFORMAL situation for the males for the topic of sex was given as follows:

> You are speaking to a good male friend in a cafe. You are enjoying a nice cup of coffee and some friendly conversation. After a change of topic, the two of you begin to discuss a recent sexual encounter that took place between a man and a woman that you both know.

This situation is considered informal because the cafe setting is casual, and the companion is a peer of the same gender, someone with whom the informant feels comfortable. The situation given for the females was the same; however, the friend specified was female. The FORMAL situation for the males was set out as follows:

> You are speaking to a male doctor while at your yearly physical examination. The two of you are sitting in the office, discussing health in general. As a person who likes to understand medical concerns, you begin to discuss the act of sex between a man and a woman.

This is considered a formal situation because the setting is official, a doctor's office, and the relationship between the informant and the doctor is professional. The discussion also concerns the act of sex from a medical rather than a personal standpoint. Again, the situation for the females was

the same as this one, although the doctor mentioned was female.

The INFORMAL situation given for the topic of death is very similar to that given for sex. For the males it read:

> You are speaking to a good male friend in a cafe. You are enjoying a nice cup of coffee and some friendly conversation. After a change of topic, the two of you begin to discuss the recent death of somebody you both know.

This situation is considered INFORMAL for the same reasons as given above in the sex situation. In the female survey, the friend indicated was female. The FORMAL situation for death for the males was also similar to the FORMAL situation given above for sex:

> You are speaking to a male doctor while at your yearly physical examination. The two of you are sitting in the office, discussing health in general. As a person who likes to understand medical concerns, you begin to discuss the recent death of somebody you both know.

The females were also given this situation in their surveys, once again with a female doctor specified. Five informants, three English and two Russian, were contacted after the survey was completed and were asked if they felt these situations were indeed INFORMAL and FORMAL; all agreed that they had perceived the informality and formality of the situations as such.

Section 1, "adding terms," was included in the survey to ensure the lists used were as comprehensive as possible, but very few informants added terms; therefore, those data will not be included in this discussion. Informant RF4, upon not adding any terms to the list provided, wrote, "That about covers it!"

For the Ranking task, only the top five ranks will be considered, as beyond seven digits (plus or minus two), informants do not have a good frame of reference to rank any parameter with accuracy. In fact, a lot of informants did not rank over five terms, some ranking even fewer. To justify ranking only five terms, informant RM4 wrote, "I don't use any other words." Therefore, he had no frame of reference for the terms ranked six and higher. The results for this task indicate the average number of times that words from each category were mentioned in the top five. For example, if all the informants ranked two NEUTRAL terms each in the top five in the INFORMAL SITUATION, the result would be 2.0 on average.

For the Frequency task, as previously noted, the scale used was 1=always; 2=often; 3=sometimes; 4=rarely; and 5=never. The informants ranked their use of each term according to this scale. In the Offensiveness task, the informants were asked if they found the terms offensive, according to the given situation. The scale used was 1=no way; 2=not likely; 3=in between; 4=probably; and 5=definitely.

### 3.1 Russian Males: Sex

The first results to be analyzed in this study are those of the male Russian-speaking informants. See Table 1 on page 23 for the results. For the Ranking task in the INFORMAL situation, all five informants were more inclined to use the terms from the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category. On average, 3.4 of the top five ranks came from this category. The two terms from this

category that appeared in the top five rankings of all informants were *ebalis'* and *potrakhalis'*. The second most common category was that of the NEUTRAL terms, with each informant ranking a NEUTRAL term once in the top five. This term for all informants was the same, *zanimalis' seksom*. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category only had three occurrences in the top five rankings of all informants, each time being the phrase *zanimalis' liubov'iu*.

These results are in stark contrast to the rankings found in the FORMAL situation. PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms had zero occurrences in the top five rankings; in fact, not one informant ranked a PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE term higher than eight. After ranking his NEUTRAL and STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms, RM4 emphasized, "I wouldn't use any other words with my doctor!" The NEUTRAL category held the most top five rankings with an average of 2.4 out of five. The two most common terms ranked from this category were *zanimalis' seksom* and *byli v liubovnoj sviazi*. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category was rated second with an average of 1.8 top five rankings. As in the INFORMAL situation, *zanimalis' liubov'iu* was the most common choice from this category. From this data we may surmise that the sex terms of choice of male Russian-speaking informants to be used with friends belong to a strikingly different category than the terms of choice to be used with a doctor: PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms versus NEUTRAL terms.

The Frequency task also produced some interesting results for comparison. In the INFORMAL situation, the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category again was the highest-ranked category with an average of 3.0, or a

ranking of *sometimes*. The NEUTRAL and STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms had an equal ranking of 3.7, closest to *rarely* on the scale. The Russian-speaking male informants, therefore, appear to use PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms with their friends more often than any other terms when discussing sex.

In contrast, in the FORMAL situation the informants rated the NEUTRAL terms as those highest in frequency of use with a ranking of 2.3, or *often* used. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were the second choice on average with a *sometimes* ranking of 3.2. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms jumped from first choice in the INFORMAL situation to third in the FORMAL situation. These terms were ranked at 4.1, or *rarely* used. The informants are much less inclined to use such taboo words with their doctors than their friends; therefore the FORMAL situation is much less conducive to the use of PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms.

For the Offensiveness task, the rankings were very similar in both situations. The NEUTRAL terms were rated as least offensive, in both instances having a ranking of 1.9, or *not likely* to be offensive. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were also not considered highly offensive. In the INFORMAL situation they received a ranking of 2.1, and in the FORMAL situation 2.4; therefore, they were also considered *not likely* to be offensive by the informants. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms, however, had higher rankings of offensiveness in both situations. In the INFORMAL situation, they had an average ranking of 3.6, leaning towards the ranking of *probably* offensive. In the FORMAL situation they rated a little higher at the *probably*

offensive ranking of 4.0. These findings indicate that taboo words, despite enjoying more common usage in the last few decades, are still considered offensive in various situations. It is interesting to note, however, that since the average ranking was only 4.0, the terms are not considered *definitely* offensive in a formal situation.

### 3.2 Russian Males: Death

In the INFORMAL situation for the Ranking task, the death results differed somewhat from the sex results, where we saw that the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category had the highest ranking in the top five. When discussing death, however, the Russian-speaking males ranked the NEUTRAL terms highest with an average of 3.4 ranking in the top five. See Table 2 on page 26 for the Russian male results for death. The terms from this category that made the top five ranking of all informants were *umer(la)* and *skonchalsia(-las')*. The second-highest ranking category was the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category with an average rank of 1.0 in the top five. Each informant included one STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED term in his ranking. These terms were *ushel(-la) iz zhizni*, *otpravilsia(-las') na tot svet*, and *otdal(a) bogu dushu*. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category had the lowest occurrence in the top five with a rank of 0.6 out of five. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms that were ranked included *otbrosil(a) kon'ki* and *otbrosil(a) kopyta*.

TABLE 1

RUSSIAN MALES: SEX

| | | Informal | Formal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Section 2: *Top Five Rankings* | | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 1.0 | 2.4 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 0.6 | 1.8 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.4 | 0.0 |
| Section 3: *Frequency of Use* | | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 3.7 | 2.3 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 3.7 | 3.2 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.0 | 4.1 |
| Section 4: *Level of Offensiveness* | | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.1 | 2.4 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.6 | 4.0 |

Whereas the sex results varied strongly between the INFORMAL AND FORMAL situations, the results for death are very similar in both situations. In the FORMAL situation for death the NEUTRAL category again ranked first at 3.4 out of the top five on average, with the same terms placing in the rankings. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms differed only slightly, placing a bit lower in the FORMAL situation at 0.6 out of five. *Ushel(-la) iz zhizni* and *otdal(a) bogu dushu* were again the terms chosen from this category. The biggest difference between the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations, and a small one at that, was the zero occurrence of PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms in the rankings for the FORMAL situation. None of the informants ranked a taboo phrase in the top five; the highest rank of a PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE term, *svernulsia (-las')*, was at number seven. The formality of the situation seemed to play a greater role in determining word choice when the topic was sex; it appears that word choice for the topic of death is not as dependent on the formality of the situation, but perhaps on the somberness of the topic itself.

In the Frequency task, the results were again very similar in the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. In both instances, the NEUTRAL terms ranked highest in frequency of use at 1.9, or *often* used. In the INFORMAL situation the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms had an equal ranking of 3.7, and in the FORMAL situation both categories ranked at 4.0. In these four instances the terms were rated at *rarely* for frequency of use. This data leads to the conclusion that NEUTRAL terms are used by Russian-speaking males on a regular basis when discussing

death in both INFORMAL and FORMAL situations, whereas STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms rarely come into use in either situation.

In the Offensiveness task, as follows, the results for the levels of offensiveness of the death terms are again similar in both situations. The NEUTRAL terms were ranked least offensive by the informants, having an average of 2.1 in INFORMAL and 1.7 in FORMAL situations, both considered *not likely* to be offensive. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were rated 2.7 and 2.8 respectively for the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations, at an *in between* level of offensiveness. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE death terms had higher ratings of offensiveness than even the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE sex terms. They were rated at 4.4 in the INFORMAL situation and 4.3 in the FORMAL situation, falling between *probably* and *definitely* offensive. Perhaps the more NEUTRAL word choices and higher levels of offensiveness associated with the topic of death support the statement that death has indeed "become the great taboo subject," as noted in the introduction.

### 3.3 Russian Females: Sex

The next results to be analyzed are those of the female Russian-speaking informants for the topic of sex. See Table 3 on page 30. In the Ranking task of the INFORMAL situation, the female informants were almost equally inclined to use NEUTRAL and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms, with average top five rankings of 1.4 and 1.6 respectively. All informants ranked

TABLE 2

RUSSIAN MALES: DEATH

| | Informal | Formal |
|---|---|---|
| Section 2: *Top Five Rankings* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 3.4 | 3.4 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 1.0 | 0.6 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 0.6 | 0.0 |
| Section 3: *Frequency of Use* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 3.7 | 4.0 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.7 | 4.0 |
| Section 4: *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 2.1 | 1.7 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.7 | 2.8 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 4.4 | 4.3 |

the NEUTRAL term *zanimalis' seksom* in the top five. Their other top five NEUTRAL choices varied. All informants, however, agreed in their top five choices of PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms: *ebalis'* and *potrakhalis'*. The least common choice was the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category, which averaged a rank of 0.8 out of the top five. The terms ranked from this category included *zanimalis' liubov'iu*, *zaveli roman*, and *predavalis' liubvi*.

The FORMAL situation produced some interesting results, not because of how the terms were ranked, but how they were not ranked. Informant RF2 ranked only one term, RF4 ranked two terms, RF3 and RF5 each ranked three terms, and RF1 ranked seven terms. The NEUTRAL category was the first choice of all informants, rating an average of 2.0 out of the top five choices. *Zanimalis' seksom* was ranked first choice by four informants, and second by the remaining informant. *Sozhitel'stvovali* also ranked in the top five from the NEUTRAL category. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category averaged 0.8 ranks out of five, with three informants choosing the terms *zaveli roman* and *zanimalis' liubov'iu*. No informants included the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms at any rank in this section, giving the category a ranking of zero out of five. While the choice of NEUTRAL terms did not vary much between the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations, and the choice of STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms retained the same average ranking of 0.8, the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms showed the sharpest change, dropping from 1.6 rankings out of five to zero in the FORMAL situation.

In the Frequency task where the frequency of use was ranked, the

results showed a somewhat different trend than that seen in the Ranking task. In the INFORMAL situation, the NEUTRAL category again placed highest in usage with an average of 3.7, falling close to *rarely* on the scale. Whereas in the rankings in the Ranking task the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms placed almost equally to the NEUTRAL terms, in the Frequency task they fall to second place with a rating of 4.1, a strong *rarely* on the scale. This result indicates that the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms *ebalis'* and *potrakhalis'* are in frequent usage according to the rankings in the Ranking task, but when combined with the remaining PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms as a category, the category is rarely used. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms are third in frequency of use with a ranking of 4.5, halfway between *rarely* and *never* used on the scale.

The results in the FORMAL situation do not vary greatly from the INFORMAL situation. The NEUTRAL category again places first in frequency of use with a *sometimes* average of 3.2 on the scale. The largest variance is seen in the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category, which now places second in usage at 3.7. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms place at 3.8, almost equal to the usage of STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms. Both categories are used by the informants on a close to *rarely* frequency. Without much variance between the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations, it is possible to surmise that Russian-speaking females treat the usage of sex terms independently of the formality of the situation.

The results in the Offensiveness task are also fairly similar in both the

INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. For the level of offensiveness, the categories were ranked NEUTRAL for least offensive and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE for most offensive. The NEUTRAL terms were rated 1.7 in the INFORMAL situation and 1.9 in the FORMAL situation, or *not likely* to be offensive. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms placed second in offensiveness, considered slightly more offensive (2.7 or *in between*) in the FORMAL situation than the INFORMAL situation (2.0 or *not likely*.) The most offensive category, PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms, also showed the same pattern, ranking 4.2 (*probably*) for the FORMAL situation and 3.6 (*in between/probably*) for the INFORMAL situation.

### 3.4 Russian Females: Death

As in the situations concerning sex, the results for death for the female Russian-speaking informants are very similar in both the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. See Table 4 on page 33. In the Ranking task of the INFORMAL situation, the NEUTRAL category had the highest number of terms in the top five rankings, with an average of 3.4 in five. The most common NEUTRAL terms ranked in the top five by the informants were *umer(la)* and *skonchalsia(-las')*, both terms being included by each informant. The categories of STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms placed almost equally at 0.8 and 0.6 in the top five respectively. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms that were ranked varied from one informant to the other, but included *usnul(a) naveki, otpravilsia(-las') na tot svet,*

TABLE 3

RUSSIAN FEMALES: SEX

| | | Informal | Formal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Section 2: | *Top Five Rankings* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 1.4 | 2.0 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 1.6 | 0.0 |
| Section 3: | *Frequency of Use* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 3.7 | 3.2 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 4.5 | 3.7 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 4.1 | 3.8 |
| Section 4: | *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 1.7 | 1.9 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.0 | 2.7 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.6 | 4.2 |

*otdal(a) bogu dushu*, and *ushel(-la) iz zhizni*. For the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms, only *sdokhnul(a)* appeared in the top five rankings.

The Ranking task of the FORMAL situation produced strikingly similar results. The NEUTRAL terms again had the highest occurrence of terms ranked in the top five with an average of 3.2. *Umer(la)* and *skonchalsia(-las')* were again found consistently in the top five ranks throughout the informants' responses. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms both placed at 0.4 occurrences out of five on average. This slight drop from the INFORMAL situation can perhaps be explained by the fact that RF2, RF3, and RF4 ranked fewer than five terms each. The same STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms chosen in the INFORMAL situation were also chosen in the FORMAL situation.

In the INFORMAL situation of the Frequency task, the NEUTRAL terms were rated highest for frequency of use by the informants. This category had an average rating of 2.3 for its terms, earning close to an *often* rating. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms (3.5) and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms (3.7) again had very similar ratings, falling between *sometimes* and *rarely* for frequency of use. Therefore, the informants were more likely to use NEUTRAL terms than STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms when discussing death with their friends.

The FORMAL situation showed similar patterns for frequency of use of death terms. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were again ranked almost identically, with *rarely* scores of 3.7 and 3.8

respectively on the scale. It appears that the female Russian-speaking informants tend to avoid both these categories when discussing death with a doctor. The category of NEUTRAL terms, therefore, are the words of choice of these informants. The NEUTRAL terms were ranked at 2.6 on the scale, a designation between *often* and *sometimes* for usage. These continuing similarities in the results of the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations lend more support to the theory that the topic has more weight than formality when it comes to word choice for the female Russian-speaking informants.

The rankings for the level of offensiveness show some variance between the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations, although not to a great degree. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were considered most offensive in both categories. They were rated 3.9 in the INFORMAL situation and 4.1 in the FORMAL situation, in both instances *probably* offensive. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms also had similar rankings in the two situations. In the INFORMAL situation they were considered slightly less offensive at 2.5, falling halfway between *not likely* and *in between* for offensiveness. In the FORMAL situation they were rated 2.8 by the informants, closer to an *in between* level of offensiveness. The largest variance was found in the ranking of the NEUTRAL terms. In the INFORMAL situation they averaged 1.6, between a *no way* and *not likely* rating of offensiveness. In the FORMAL situation, however, these terms were ranked at 2.3 for offensiveness. Once again, these results for the female Russian-speaking informants on the topic of death are consistent in both the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations.

TABLE 4

RUSSIAN FEMALES: DEATH

| | | Informal | Formal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Section 2: *Top Five Rankings* | | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 3.4 | 3.2 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 0.8 | 0.4 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 0.6 | 0.4 |
| Section 3: *Frequency of Use* | | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 2.3 | 2.6 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 3.5 | 3.7 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.7 | 3.8 |
| Section 4: *Level of Offensiveness* | | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 1.6 | 2.3 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.5 | 2.8 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.9 | 4.1 |

### 3.5 Russian Males Vs. Females: Sex

The next comparisons turn the focus away from the INFORMAL vs. FORMAL distinction, and toward the male vs. female distinction. For this section the INFORMAL and FORMAL results for sex have been combined for each gender, in order to compare the overall results of males and females and to give the numerical ratings more weight. See Table 5 on page 36 for these results.

In the Ranking task, where the informants ranked the sex terms in order of their usage, few differences were found between the males and females. As in the previous comparisons, only the top five rankings will be considered in this data. For both genders, the NEUTRAL terms occurred 1.7 times in the top five on average. The NEUTRAL term *zanimalis' seksom* was the most common choice for both males and females. The differences arise in the rankings of the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms occurred 0.8 times out of five in the female surveys, in contrast to the slightly higher 1.2 times in the male surveys. Despite this difference in ranking, the word choices, e.g. *zanimalis' liubov'iu*, remained fairly consistent between the genders. The biggest contrast involves the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms. The females placed these terms in the top five only 0.8 times on average, whereas the males ranked them 1.7 times in the top five. In fact, the males ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms as highly as they did the NEUTRAL terms. From these results, it is possible to conclude that the males use more PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE sex terms in their

top five word choices than the females do. This difference is especially marked when the informal situation alone is compared. The males ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms 3.4 times in the top five, and the females ranked them at 1.6.

The Frequency task also showed some gender variability in frequency of use. As a whole, the males were more likely to use terms from all three categories, as their rankings were lower for each category to some extent. The males ranked the NEUTRAL terms at 3.0, *sometimes*, while the females ranked them at a slightly less frequent level of usage at 3.5. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were placed at 3.5 on the scale by the males, and at 4.1 by the females. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were ranked almost identically - 3.6 by the males and 4.0 by the females. The last two categories were afforded only a minimal spread in usage by both genders, although the usage is slightly higher for both categories for the males.

In the Offensiveness task, where the informants ranked the level of offensiveness of each term, the results of the males and females were almost identical. The males ranked the NEUTRAL terms at 1.9 and the females at 1.8, both with a *not likely* level of offensiveness. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were ranked 2.3 by the males and 2.4 by the females, between the *not likely* and *in between* levels of offensiveness on the scale. The similar results continued with the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms, with the males ranking them at 3.8 and the females at 3.9, or *probably* offensive. The level of offensiveness of a word or phrase does not appear to be connected to

gender, whereas word choice, to some extent, does.

TABLE 5

RUSSIAN MALES VS. FEMALES: SEX
(informal & formal combined)

| | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|
| Section 2: *Top Five Rankings* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 1.2 | 0.8 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 1.7 | 0.8 |
| Section 3: *Frequency of Use* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 3.0 | 3.5 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 3.5 | 4.1 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.6 | 4.0 |
| Section 4: *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 1.9 | 1.8 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.3 | 2.4 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.8 | 3.9 |

### 3.6 Russian Males Vs. Females: Death

In this section, the combined INFORMAL and FORMAL results for death for both genders will be compared. See Table 6 on page 39. In the Ranking task the top five rankings did not vary greatly between the genders. Both the males and the females ranked the NEUTRAL terms 3.3 times in the top five. Of the NEUTRAL terms, both genders also ranked *umer(la)* and *skonchalsia(-las')* in the top five. The males and females then ranked the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms as the next highest ranking category in the top five. Males (0.9) ranked these STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms slightly higher than the females did (0.6). Both genders also had a high variety of STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms occurring in the top five, including *otpravilsia(-las') na tot svet*, *otdal(a) bogu dushu*, and *ushel(-la) iz zhizni*. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms showed the lowest occurrence in the top five ranking, at 0.4 for the males and 0.5 for the females. Despite this similar ranking, the choice of those PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms appearing were in contrast: *sdokhnul(a)* appeared in the female rankings and *otbrosil(a) kon'ki* and *otbrosil(a) kopyta* appeared in the male surveys. Despite some small differences in these rankings and word choices, both males and females ranked the NEUTRAL terms in the top five much more than any other category.

For the next results, the frequency of use of the death terms will be compared. The males used the NEUTRAL terms on a more frequent basis, ranking them at 1.9, or *often*. The females, on the other hand, ranked the NEUTRAL terms at 2.5, between *often* and *sometimes* on the scale of use.

Both genders showed a large drop in usage from the NEUTRAL to the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms. The females ranked the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms at 3.6, between *sometimes* and *rarely*, and the males ranked them at 3.9, or *rarely*. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms also had a low frequency of usage, ranking 3.8 by the females and 3.9 by the males, both at *rarely* on the scale. From this data we can determine that both genders use the NEUTRAL terms on a much more regular basis than the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms when discussing death.

The results from the task on the levels of offensiveness of the death terms were also similar for males and females. The NEUTRAL terms were rated least offensive by both genders, coming in at 1.9 for the males and 2.0 for the females, a ranking of *not likely* to be offensive. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were ranked at *in between* levels of offensiveness; the females ranked them at 2.7 and the males at 2.8. The most offensive terms for both males and females were the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms, although the genders ranked the terms at slightly different levels. The males considered the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms more offensive at 4.4, *probably* to *definitely* offensive, and the females slightly less so at 4.0, *probably* offensive. As shown in the sex results, the offensiveness of the terms are perceived at the same levels by the different genders, even if their frequency of usage varies.

TABLE 6

RUSSIAN MALES VS. FEMALES: DEATH
(informal & formal combined)

| | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|
| Section 2: *Top Five Rankings* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 3.3 | 3.3 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 0.9 | 0.6 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 0.4 | 0.5 |
| Section 3: *Frequency of Use* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 1.9 | 2.5 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 3.9 | 3.6 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.9 | 3.8 |
| Section 4: *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 1.9 | 2.0 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.8 | 2.7 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 4.4 | 4.0 |

### 3.7 English Males: Sex

The next language group to be analyzed in this study is English, with a look first at the male English-speaking informants. The first comparison will pertain to the differences in INFORMAL vs. FORMAL situations when the topic is sex. See Table 7 on page 43.

In the Ranking task in the INFORMAL situation, the informants ranked the NEUTRAL terms and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms equally at 2.2 occurrences each in the top five ranks. The most common choices from the NEUTRAL category were *had sex* and *did it*, and from the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category were *screwed* and *fucked*. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category was a distant third with 0.5 occurrences in the top five, the terms *coupled* and *were intimate* being ranked once each.

The FORMAL situation showed a drastic drop in the instance of PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms in the top five ranks, occurring only 0.5 times in the rankings. The only PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE term which ranked in the top five was *get laid*. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category increased slightly to 1.0 in the top five, the terms *were intimate* and *performed the marriage act* each appearing in the ranks. The NEUTRAL terms increased slightly as well to 2.8 out of five, *slept together*, *did it*, and *had sex* being the most common choices. These results indicate that the informants are much more likely to use the top-ranking PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms in INFORMAL rather than FORMAL situations.

In the Frequency task in the INFORMAL situation, the English-speaking

males ranked the NEUTRAL terms highest at 2.4, between *often* and *sometimes* on the scale of use. The second most frequently used terms were from the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category, ranking at 3.7, closest to *rarely* on the scale. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were the least often used, ranking in at 4.3 on average.

The results in the FORMAL situation were not altogether different from the INFORMAL situation. The informants again ranked the NEUTRAL terms as the most often used, with an even slightly higher ranking of 2.1, or *often*. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms dropped to the least often used category, but only by a small margin. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were ranked at 4.1, while the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were ranked at 4.0, both categories *rarely* used on average. The informants, therefore, use NEUTRAL terms at a slightly higher frequency and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms at a slightly lower frequency in the FORMAL situation than they do in the INFORMAL situation.

The results for the Offensiveness task showed some variance in the levels of offensiveness between the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. In the INFORMAL situation the NEUTRAL terms were ranked at 1.5 for offensiveness, on the scale between *no way* and *not likely* to be offensive. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were ranked close behind at 1.7, considered almost as inoffensive as the NEUTRAL terms. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were ranked the most offensive of all the categories at 2.7, almost at an *in between* level of offensiveness.

In the FORMAL situation, the categories followed the same pattern: NEUTRAL terms as the least offensive and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms as the most offensive. The NEUTRAL terms had a slightly higher ranking of 1.8 than they did in the INFORMAL situation, closer to the *not likely* to be offensive rank. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms also increased slightly to 2.1 on the scale. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms saw the most dramatic increase with a ranking of 3.3, or an *in between* level of offensiveness. From this data it is possible to conclude that all the sex terms increased in perceived offensiveness in the FORMAL situation.

### 3.8 English Males: Death

In this section the results of the male English-speaking informants on the topic of death will be examined. See Table 8 on page 46. In the INFORMAL situation of the Ranking task, the informants ranked the NEUTRAL terms the most frequently in the top five, with an average of 2.8. The terms from this category that were ranked in the top five by all informants were *died* and *passed away*. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were ranked equally in this section, both averaging 1.0 terms each in the top five. *Deceased* and *perished* were the terms chosen from the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category by the informants, while *croaked*, *kicked the bucket*, and *bit the dust* from the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category all ranked in the top five.

TABLE 7

ENGLISH MALES: SEX

| | | Informal | Formal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Section 2: | *Top Five Rankings* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 2.2 | 2.8 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 0.5 | 1.0 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 2.2 | 0.5 |
| Section 3: | *Frequency of Use* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 2.4 | 2.1 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 4.3 | 4.0 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.7 | 4.1 |
| Section 4: | *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 1.5 | 1.8 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 1.7 | 2.1 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 2.7 | 3.3 |

In the FORMAL situation the largest change was seen in the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category, which dropped from 1.0 to 0.2 occurrences in the top five ranks. The only PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE term included in the rankings was *checked out*. Where the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms decreased, the NEUTRAL terms increased, to 3.0 terms in the top five. Similar to the INFORMAL situation, the most common terms from this category were *died*, *passed away*, and *passed on*. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category remained at an average of 1.0 terms ranked in the top five, with *deceased* and *perished* placing in the rankings. In both situations, the NEUTRAL terms were ranked frequently in the top five, and can therefore be considered the first words of choice of the informants.

In the next task we examine the frequency of use of the death terms. In the INFORMAL situation, the NEUTRAL terms were ranked highest at an *often* level of usage, having an average of 2.2 on the scale. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms made up the next frequently-used category with a ranking of 3.9, or *rarely* used. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were a little less frequently used, ranking at 4.2. For the topic of death it is apparent that the male English-speaking informants use NEUTRAL terms much more frequently than the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED or PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms.

This trend holds true for the FORMAL situation as well. The NEUTRAL terms had an almost equal ranking of 2.3, decreasing in usage marginally from the INFORMAL situation. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms increased slightly in usage in the FORMAL situation, ranking at 3.9, *rarely* used according

to the scale. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms had a dramatic decrease in usage, dropping to 4.7, an almost *never* frequency of usage. The formality of the situation had a large influence on the frequency of use of the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms, whereas it seems to have little influence on the frequency of use of NEUTRAL and STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms.

The levels of offensiveness given in the Offensiveness task are nearly identical in the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. The NEUTRAL terms were ranked 1.2 in the FORMAL and 1.4 in the INFORMAL situation for offensiveness. These rankings fall between *no way* and *not likely* to be offensive. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were ranked 2.5 and 2.6 in the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations respectively, between *not likely* and *in between* for offensiveness. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were ranked at 3.7 in both situations, close to *probably* offensive on the scale. Due to the similarity in these results, it seems the informants feel that the level of offensiveness of the terms is independent of the formality of the situation.

### 3.9 English Females: Sex

The next group of informants to be compared in this study are the English-speaking females, the largest group responding with eleven informants. In this section the analysis will focus on the INFORMAL vs. FORMAL comparison with the topic of sex. See Table 9 on page 50.

In the Ranking task where the informants were asked to rank the sex terms in the order of their use, the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations showed

TABLE 8

ENGLISH MALES: DEATH

| | Informal | Formal |
|---|---|---|
| Section 2: *Top Five Rankings* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 2.8 | 3.0 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 1.0 | 0.2 |
| Section 3: *Frequency of Use* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 2.2 | 2.3 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 4.2 | 3.9 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.9 | 4.7 |
| Section 4: *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 1.4 | 1.2 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.5 | 2.6 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.7 | 3.7 |

some variance. In the INFORMAL situation the NEUTRAL terms had the highest number of terms ranking in the top five, with 2.7 terms on average. From this category, ten informants ranked *had sex*, nine informants ranked *slept together*, and eight informants ranked *did it* in the top five. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were the second most common terms ranked in the top five, with an average of 2.0 terms. Six informants ranked *screwed*, five ranked *fucked*, and four ranked *got laid* in the top five sex terms. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category was a distant third in this section, averaging only 0.3 terms in the top five. The term *were intimate* was ranked only three times by the informants.

The numbers changed slightly in the FORMAL situation. The NEUTRAL terms remained the highest ranking category with an average of 3.0 terms in the top five. The terms *had sex* and *slept together* were each ranked by ten informants, while *made love* was ranked by eight informants. The term *did it* dropped to four rankings from eight in the INFORMAL situation. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms jumped to 1.6 in the rankings, the second highest ranked terms in the FORMAL situation. Along with *were intimate*, the lone STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED term ranked in the INFORMAL situation, the terms *performed the marriage act*, *mated*, *copulated*, and *coupled* were included in the top five rankings of the FORMAL situation. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category dropped to 0.3 terms on average, the terms *got laid* and *fornicated* the only ones ranked from this category.

The results for the Frequency task also reflect the rankings in the

INFORMAL and FORMAL situations for the Ranking task. In the INFORMAL situation, the NEUTRAL terms were ranked most frequent in use with an average of 2.0, or *often* used according to the scale. The next category in frequency was the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category, averaging 3.8, or *rarely* used, on the scale. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were used slightly less frequently, ranking 4.3 on the scale.

In the FORMAL situation the NEUTRAL terms were again the most frequently used terms, ranking in at 2.2, another *often* designation. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms, however, jumped into the second most commonly used category ranking at 3.6, between *sometimes* and *rarely* used on the scale. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms dropped to least-frequently used status at 4.6, between *rarely* and *never* used. While the English-speaking females use NEUTRAL terms most often in both situations, they use the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms more than the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms in the INFORMAL situation, and the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms more than the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms in the FORMAL situation. This difference indicates that the female English-speaking informants feel comfortable using taboo terms only in casual settings.

The results indicating the level of offensiveness of the terms do not vary much from the INFORMAL to the FORMAL situation. The NEUTRAL terms were considered least offensive in both situations, ranking at 1.3 in the INFORMAL and 1.5 in the FORMAL situation. Both rankings fall between *no way* and *not likely* to offend. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were also deemed *not*

*likely* to be offensive at 1.8 in the INFORMAL and 1.9 in the FORMAL situation. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were ranked as most offensive. In the INFORMAL situation they averaged 3.0 on the scale, or *in between* for offensiveness. Informants EF3 and EF6 stood out among all the informants for their responses in this section. EF3 rated all nineteen sex terms at 1, or *no way* for offensiveness, whether NEUTRAL, STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED or PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE in nature. EF6, on the other hand, ranked the twelve of the nineteen terms at 5, or *definitely* offensive, emphasizing that they are "phrases I would never use." The FORMAL situation saw a slight increase in offensiveness with a ranking of 3.7, closer to *probably* offensive according to the scale. These results again indicate that the level of offensiveness of a term is less dependent on the formality of the situation than the actual feeling evoked by the term for the informant.

### 3.10 English Females: Death

The results of the female English-speaking informants on the topic of death are the next to be discussed in this study. See Table 10 on page 53. The results in the Ranking task are similar for both the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. In the INFORMAL situation the NEUTRAL terms are ranked in the top five with the most frequency, averaging 3.5 terms. There were only four English death terms in the NEUTRAL category, and all four were highly ranked. All eleven informants ranked *passed away* in the top five, nine ranked *died* and *passed on*, and eight ranked *lost his/her life*. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED

TABLE 9

ENGLISH FEMALES: SEX

| | Informal | Formal |
|---|---|---|
| Section 2: Top *Five Rankings* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 2.7 | 3.0 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 0.3 | 1.6 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 2.0 | 0.3 |
| Section 3: *Frequency of Use* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 2.0 | 2.2 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 4.3 | 3.6 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.8 | 4.6 |
| Section 4: *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 1.3 | 1.5 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 1.8 | 1.9 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.0 | 3.7 |

terms placed second, ranking an average 1.0 terms in the top five. *Deceased* was by far the most common STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED term to be ranked, as six informants selected it. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were third in ranking, with only 0.5 terms placing in the top five. The terms included *up and died*, *croaked*, *kicked the bucket*, *bit the dust*, and *checked out*.

In the FORMAL situation, the NEUTRAL terms again ranked highest at 3.3 terms in the top five, although only three of the four NEUTRAL death terms were highly ranked. Eleven informants ranked *died*, ten ranked *passed away* and *passed on*, but only five ranked *lost his/her life* in the top five, dropping from eight in the INFORMAL situation. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms increased slightly to 1.5 in the top five, with both *deceased* and *perished* having multiple rankings. In fact, *deceased* increased from six in the INFORMAL to nine appearances in the top five of the FORMAL situation. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category decreased to 0.1 terms, with only informant EF5 ranking a PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE term, *up and died*, in the top five.

For the the Frequency task, the results between the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations did not show any marked differences. In the INFORMAL situation, the NEUTRAL terms were the most commonly used, ranking 2.0 (*often*) on the scale. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were both ranked at *rarely* for usage, the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms (4.0) ranked marginally higher then the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms (4.2).

In the FORMAL situation, the NEUTRAL terms again had the highest

frequency of use at 1.8, another *often* designation. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms also maintained its ranking of *rarely* at 3.9, a negligible 0.1 increase in use over the INFORMAL situation. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms dropped slightly to 4.5, between *rarely* and *never* used on the scale. NEUTRAL terms, as the most often used, are therefore the terms of choice of the female English-speaking informants in both the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations.

The levels of offensiveness show similar results as well for the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. The NEUTRAL terms were ranked at 1.3 in both situations, a ranking leaning toward *no way* for offensiveness. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms had slightly higher rankings of 2.3 in the INFORMAL and 2.6 in the FORMAL situation, on the scale between *not likely* and *in between* for offensiveness. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were considered the most offensive in both situations. The informants ranked them at 3.7 in the INFORMAL situation, and slightly higher at 3.9 in the FORMAL situation. Both rankings are closest to *probably* offensive on the scale. The results in both situations for the female English-speaking informants are similar in Sections 2, 3, and 4, supporting the aforementioned theory that word choice and usage for the topic of death is not heavily influenced by the formality of the situation.

### 3.11 English Males Vs. Females: Sex

The comparisons again shift the focus from the informality and formality

TABLE 10

ENGLISH FEMALES: DEATH

| | | Informal | Formal |
|---|---|---|---|
| Section 2: | *Top Five Rankings* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 3.5 | 3.3 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 1.0 | 1.5 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 0.5 | 0.1 |
| Section 3: | *Frequency of Use* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 2.0 | 1.8 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 4.0 | 3.9 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 4.2 | 4.5 |
| Section 4: | *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 1.3 | 1.3 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.3 | 2.6 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.7 | 3.9 |

of the given situations to the similarities and differences between the genders, in this instance the male and female English-speaking informants. To make a general comparison between the males and females, the results from the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations have been combined. See Table 11 on page 57.

In the Ranking task the top five rankings showed some slight variation between the genders. The males ranked the NEUTRAL terms highest in the top five with an average of 2.0 terms. The females ranked these terms even higher, averaging 2.9 NEUTRAL terms in the top five rankings. While both genders highly ranked *had sex* and *did it*, the females also highly ranked *slept together*. Both genders ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms next most frequently in the top five, the females at a rate of 1.2 and the males slightly higher at 1.4. The choice of terms was again similar, with both choosing *screwed* and *fucked*, and the females also choosing *got laid*. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were ranked the least frequently in the top five. The females ranked them at 1.0 and the males marginally lower at 0.8 in the top five ranks. Both genders selected *were intimate*, but the males also had one occurrence of *coupled* in the rankings. From these data we may conclude that the females use more NEUTRAL sex terms in their top five word choices than the males do, while the use of STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms remains fairly constant between the genders.

The frequency of use determined in the Frequency task is strikingly similar between the males and females. Both genders ranked the NEUTRAL

terms as the most frequently used. The females ranked the NEUTRAL terms at 2.1 and the males ranked them at 2.3, both rankings closes to *often* used on the scale. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms all received rankings of *rarely* by both the males and the females, although the ordering of the categories differs. The females ranked the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms second in use at 4.0, and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms third at 4.2, although this difference is slight. The males ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms second at 3.9, and the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms third at 4.2. The general conclusion that may be drawn here is that both males and females use NEUTRAL sex terms on a much more frequent basis than they do STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE sex terms.

There were some slight gender differences found in the Offensiveness task, not in the order of the categories by offensiveness, but in the degree of offensiveness of the categories. The NEUTRAL terms were ranked least offensive by both genders, falling on the scale between *no way* and *not likely* to offend. The males ranked the NEUTRAL terms at 1.7 and the females ranked them at 1.4. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were ranked at 1.9 by both the males and females, or *not likely* to be offensive. The largest difference was found in the rankings of the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms. The males ranked them at 3.0 (*in between*), while the females ranked them more offensive at 3.4 (*in between* to *probably* offensive.) While the genders order the categories according to offensiveness in the same fashion, the level of

offensiveness does vary slightly; the females find the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms more offensive than the males do, even though both find the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category most offensive of all the categories.

### 3.12 English Males Vs. Females: Death

The male vs. female comparison for the topic of death is the main focus of this section. See Table 12 on page 60. The results in the rankings of the Ranking task varied slightly between the English-speaking males and females. Both males and females ranked the NEUTRAL terms with the highest frequency in the top five. On average the males ranked 2.9 and the females ranked 3.4 NEUTRAL terms in the top five. The most common choices of the males and females were *died* and *passed away*, while the females also highly ranked *passed on* and *lost his/her life*. The next category in the rankings for both genders was the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category. These terms were ranked slightly higher by the females at an average 1.3 occurrences in the top five, while the males ranked them at 1.0. Both groups of informants ranked *deceased* from this category, while the females also ranked the term *perished*. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category had the fewest terms in the top five on average, although this category had the widest variety of terms making the top five. *Up and died*, *croaked*, *kicked the bucket*, *bit the dust*, and *checked out* all appeared at least once in the rankings. The males ranked these PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms 0.6 times on average in the top five, and the

TABLE 11

ENGLISH MALES VS. FEMALES: SEX
(informal & formal combined)

| | | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|---|
| Section 2: | *Top Five Rankings* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 2.0 | 2.9 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 0.8 | 1.0 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 1.4 | 1.2 |
| Section 3: | *Frequency of Use* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 2.3 | 2.1 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 4.2 | 4.0 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.9 | 4.2 |
| Section 4: | *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 1.7 | 1.4 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.0 | 3.4 |

females on 0.3 times. It is of interest to note that the English-speaking females chose a wider variety of both sex and death terms in the rankings of the Ranking task than the males did.

The results for frequency of use showed little difference between the genders. Both males and females ranked the NEUTRAL category as the most commonly used terms. The NEUTRAL terms were ranked at 1.9, *often* used, by the females, and slightly lower at 2.3 by the males. For both genders, the next category according to frequency was the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED category. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were *rarely* used according to the scale, ranked 4.0 and 4.1 by the females and males respectively. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE category was ranked as least frequently used by a slight margin. The males ranked these *taboo* words at 4.3 and the females ranked them at 4.4, both falling on the scale between *rarely* and *never* used. From these results we may summarize that both English-speaking females and males use NEUTRAL terms as a general rule when discussing death, and only rarely do they use STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms for this topic.

The results in the Offensiveness task are nearly identical for both genders. Both males and females ranked the NEUTRAL terms at 1.3, nearest to *no way* for offensiveness on the scale. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED grouping was the second least offensive group, ranking an average 2.5 for the females and 2.6 for the males. These rankings fall between *not likely* and *in between* on the scale for offensiveness. The most offensive terms were the

PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms. These terms were ranked at 3.7 by the males and 3.8 by the females, considered *probably* offensive. Because of these similarities in the rankings of all three categories of terms, we may safely conclude that the offensiveness of death terms is perceived at the same level by males and females, and is therefore not influenced by gender.

### 3.13 Russian Vs. English: Sex

Turning away from the INFORMAL vs. FORMAL comparisons, as well as from the male vs. female comparisons, the next section will compare the Russian vs. English results. To do so, the INFORMAL and FORMAL results have been combined for each gender in each language group, then the male and female results have been combined for each language group. For example, the results for Russian are a combination of the male (INFORMAL and FORMAL) and the female (INFORMAL and FORMAL) results. See Table 13 on page 63.

In the combined results for the Ranking task, the rankings of the top five terms show little variation between the two language groups. Both the Russian and the English informants ranked the NEUTRAL terms most often in the top five. The English-speaking informants ranked them an average of 2.5 times in the top five, while the Russian-speaking informants ranked them an average of 1.7 times. This difference in rankings is the largest one found in this section; the English informants ranked almost one more NEUTRAL term on average in the top five than the Russian informants did. Both language groups ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms 1.3 times in the top five.

TABLE 12

ENGLISH MALES VS. FEMALES: DEATH
(informal & formal combined)

| | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|
| Section 2: *Top Five Rankings* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 2.9 | 3.4 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 1.0 | 1.3 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 0.6 | 0.3 |
| Section 3: *Frequency of Use* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 2.3 | 1.9 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 4.1 | 4.0 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 4.3 | 4.4 |
| Section 4: *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 1.3 | 1.3 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.6 | 2.5 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.7 | 3.8 |

For both the Russian and English informants the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were the second highest ranking terms in the top five. The least common category of terms placing in the top five were the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms. The English informants ranked them 0.9 times, and the Russian informants 1.0 times on average. Despite the different languages being used, the results from the Ranking task follow the same pattern: NEUTRAL terms are the most common top word choices, while STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms are the least common.

The results from the Frequency task also show some slight differences while still maintaining similar patterns. The Russian and English informants both rank the NEUTRAL terms as the most frequently used terms. The English informants rank them at 2.2, *often* on the scale of use. The Russian informants ranked them lower in use at 3.3, *sometimes* used. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were both ranked by the Russians at 3.8, while they were both ranked by the English at 4.1, all *rarely* on the scale of use. Therefore, both language groups prefer to use NEUTRAL terms on average when discussing sex, while they only use the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms on an infrequent basis.

The Offensiveness task also produced slight variations for the levels of offensiveness of the three categories of terms. Both groups ranked the NEUTRAL terms as least offensive, the Russians at 1.9 (*not likely*) and the English at 1.6 (*no way* to *not likely*.) The NEUTRAL terms had a slightly higher chance of being offensive to the Russian than the English informants. The

Russians ranked the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED group as the next category at 2.4, a ranking between *not likely* and *in between* for offensiveness. The English ranked this group with a lower level of offensiveness at 1.9, or *not likely* to be offensive. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were ranked the most likely to be offensive by both the English and the Russian informants. The English group ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms at 3.2, *in between* on the scale. The Russians ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms higher at 3.9, or *probably* offensive. For all three categories the Russian informants ranked the terms at higher levels of offensiveness than the English informants did. From the data collected it is not possible to conclude to what extent this difference is related to language or to the role of culture. I suggest that the patterns are similar because linguistic taboos are universal, while the levels vary because of different cultural perceptions of taboo topics.

### 3.14 Russian Vs. English: Death

The results to be compared in this section are those of the Russian and English speaking informants on the topic of death. As in the previous section, the results are a combination of the male (INFORMAL and FORMAL) and the female (INFORMAL and FORMAL) results for each language group. See Table 14 on page 66.

In the Ranking task, the results of the top five rankings are compared. The results in this section may be affected by the number of words included in the lists; the English death terms numbered twenty-two, while the Russian

TABLE 13

RUSSIAN VS. ENGLISH: SEX
(male & female, informal & formal combined)

| | | Russian | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| Section 2: | Top *Five Rankings* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 1.7 | 2.5 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 1.0 | 0.9 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 1.3 | 1.3 |
| Section 3: | *Frequency of Use* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 3.3 | 2.2 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 3.8 | 4.1 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.8 | 4.1 |
| Section 4: | *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 1.9 | 1.6 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.4 | 1.9 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.9 | 3.2 |

terms numbered only sixteen. Both the Russian and English informants ranked the NEUTRAL terms the most times in the top five, both at a very similar level. The English informants ranked the NEUTRAL terms 3.2 times and the Russians ranked them 3.3 times in the top five on average. Both language groups ranked the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms second most frequently in the top five, although at slightly different levels. The English ranked the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms 1.2 times on average, while the Russians ranked them only 0.8 times. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms had the lowest frequency of terms ranked in the top five with an average of 0.5 for both language groups. These results follow the same pattern as those found in the Russian vs. English comparisons for the topic of sex. NEUTRAL terms rank in the top five the most, and *PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE* terms ranked in the top five the least frequently.

The results in the Frequency task show some variation between the Russian and the English informants. The NEUTRAL terms are used the most, with both the Russians (2.2) and the English (2.1) ranking them at *often* on the scale. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms are ranked at almost the same level by the Russians, at 3.8 and 3.9 respectively. Both categories are *rarely* used by the Russians. The English use these categories less frequently, ranking the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms at 4.1 (*rarely*) and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms at 4.4 (*rarely* to *never*.) These results indicate that the NEUTRAL terms are the most likely to be used by both the Russian and the English speaking informants when

discussing the topic of death.

As seen in the level of offensiveness results for the topic of sex, the Russian informants perceived all three categories of terms to have higher levels of offensiveness than the English informants did. This pattern holds true for the topic of death as well. The English informants ranked the NEUTRAL terms at 1.3 (*no way*), while the Russian informants ranked them at 2.0 (*not likely*.) The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were more closely ranked by the two language groups, ranked 2.6 (*not likely* to *in between*) by the English, and 2.8 (*in between*) by the Russians. The most offensive category is that of the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms. The English ranked them at 3.8 (*probably*), and the Russians slightly more offensive at 4.2. While both the English and the Russian informants ranked the categories in the same order according to offensiveness, the Russian informants again perceived higher levels of offensiveness for each category.

### 3.15 Males Vs. Females: Sex

This section looks strictly at the male vs. female distinction on the topic of sex. The INFORMAL and FORMAL results were combined for each gender, then the Russian and English results were also combined for each gender. For example, the results for females are a combination of the Russian female (INFORMAL and FORMAL) and the English female (INFORMAL and FORMAL) results. See Table 15 on page 69.

In the results for the Ranking task, some differences between the

TABLE 14

RUSSIAN VS. ENGLISH: DEATH
(male & female, informal & formal combined)

| | | Russian | English |
|---|---|---|---|
| Section 2: | *Top Five Rankings* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 3.3 | 3.2 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 0.8 | 1.2 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Section 3: | *Frequency of Use* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 2.2 | 2.1 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 3.8 | 4.1 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.9 | 4.4 |
| Section 4: | *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| | Neutral Terms | 2.0 | 1.3 |
| | Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.8 | 2.6 |
| | Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 4.2 | 3.8 |

genders are found. Both genders ranked the NEUTRAL terms with the most frequency in the top five. The males ranked them 1.9 times in the top five on average, while the females ranked them slightly more times at 2.3 on average. Both the males and females ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms with the second highest frequency. The females ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms 1.0 times in the top five, while the males ranked them more frequently at 1.6 times on average. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms showed little difference from the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms for the female informants, ranking in the top five 0.9 times, a difference of 0.1. The males ranked the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms 1.0 times, near the same level as the females did, but unlike the females this showed a drop from the rankings of the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms.

The results from the Frequency task show similar frequencies of use of the sex terms by both genders. The males and females both ranked the NEUTRAL terms as those most frequently used. The males ranked the NEUTRAL terms at 2.7 and the females ranked them at 2.8, both *sometimes* in use. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were ranked at *rarely* for use by both genders. The females ranked both categories at 4.1 on the scale, meaning they are unlikely to use terms from either category on a frequent basis. The males ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms at 3.8 and the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms at 3.9 on the scale. These results indicate that both the male and female informants use NEUTRAL terms when discussing sex on a more regular basis than they use

PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE and STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms.

The results for the levels of offensiveness are also similar between the genders. The females and males both ranked the NEUTRAL terms as least offensive. The NEUTRAL terms were ranked at 1.6 (*no way* to *not likely*) by the females and 1.8 (*not likely*) by the males. Both genders also ranked the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms at the same level, the females ranking them 2.2 and the males ranking them 2.1. Both considered them *not likely* to be offensive. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were ranked most offensive. The males ranked them at 3.4, between *in between* and *probably* for offensiveness. The females ranked them as slightly more offensive at 3.7, closer to *probably* offensive. In general, these results show that males and females ascertain the offensiveness of categories of words at roughly the same level. Therefore, taking the two groups of language-speakers together, gender does not seem to play a large role in the perception of offensiveness of sex terms.

### 3.16 Males Vs. Females: Death

The last comparison of this study involves the male vs. female distinction on the topic of death. As in the previous section, the INFORMAL and FORMAL results were combined for each gender, then the Russian and English results for each gender were also combined. See Table 16 on page 72.

The results throughout all the sections were noticeably similar for the comparison of the genders on the topic of death. In the Ranking task, both

TABLE 15

MALES VS. FEMALES: SEX
(Russian & English, informal & formal combined)

| | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|
| Section 2: Top *Five Rankings* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 1.9 | 2.3 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 1.0 | 0.9 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 1.6 | 1.0 |
| Section 3: *Frequency of Use* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 2.7 | 2.8 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 3.9 | 4.1 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.8 | 4.1 |
| Section 4: *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 1.8 | 1.6 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.1 | 2.2 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 3.4 | 3.7 |

males and females ranked the NEUTRAL terms the most times in the top five rankings. The females ranked them 3.4 times and the males 3.1 times on average. This 0.3 difference is the largest variation found between the genders in this whole section. Both genders ranked the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED death terms in the top five with the second highest frequency, both ranking them at 1.0 on average. The PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms came third, ranked o.4 times by the females and 0.5 times by the males. We can generalize that the top word choices for the topic of death for both males and females are NEUTRAL terms, while PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms are the least likely top word choices.

In the Frequency task the results do not vary more than 0.2 for any category. The most frequently used terms for both the male and female informants are the NEUTRAL terms. The females ranked them at 2.2 and the males at 2.1 for frequency of use. These rankings are both considered *often* in usage, according to the scale. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms all fall under the *rarely* heading for usage. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms were ranked 3.8 by the females, and at a slightly lower 4.0 by the males. Both genders, however, ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms at 4.1 on the scale on average. These results clearly indicate that males and females use NEUTRAL terms on a fairly common basis when discussing death, while they use STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms only infrequently.

The levels of offensiveness ranked in the Offensiveness task again are

similar for both the male and female informants. The NEUTRAL terms are ranked least offensive, ranking at 1.7 by the females and at 1.6 by the males. Both rankings are leaning toward *not likely* to be offensive on the scale. The STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms placed second for offensiveness. The females ranked the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms at 2.6 and the males at 2.7. These rankings lean toward *in between* for offensiveness. The final category, PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms, were considered most offensive by both the males and females. The females ranked them at 3.9 and the males ranked them at 4.1, both deeming them *probably* offensive. Once again we see that the offensiveness of a category of terms is recognized at the same level by both genders; the perception of the offensiveness of a term is not influenced by gender to any noticeable degree.

TABLE 16

MALES VS. FEMALES: DEATH
(Russian & English, informal & formal combined)

| | Males | Females |
|---|---|---|
| Section 2: Top *Five Rankings* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 3.1 | 3.4 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 0.5 | 0.4 |
| Section 3: *Frequency of Use* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 2.1 | 2.2 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 4.0 | 3.8 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 4.1 | 4.1 |
| Section 4: *Level of Offensiveness* | | |
| Neutral Terms | 1.6 | 1.7 |
| Stylistically-Coloured Terms | 2.7 | 2.6 |
| Pejorative & Obscene Terms | 4.1 | 3.9 |

# CHAPTER 4

# CONCLUSION

The present study focused on three comparisons: FORMAL vs. INFORMAL situations, males vs. females, and Russian vs. English speakers. The informants completed surveys that asked them to work with lists of both sex and death terms. For each part of the survey, the informants had to 1) add any relevant terms to the list, in order that they be as comprehensive as possible; 2) rank the terms in order of usage, although only the top five rankings were included as pertinent data; 3) rank the frequency of use of each term; and 4) rank the level of offensiveness of each term. For the analysis, the terms were grouped into three categories: NEUTRAL terms, STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms, and PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms. As there were not enough informants for statistical analysis, this categorization was done in order to see general trends for the terms, rather than analyze each lexical item separately. As well, the effect of the differences in semantics, the terms being only *more or less synonymous*, was also minimized by grouping the terms in these categories.

## 4.1 Informal Vs. Formal Comparisons

Eight of the sixteen comparisons done in this study concerned the INFORMAL vs. FORMAL situations. These comparisons included 1) Russian males (sex), 2) Russian males (death), 3) Russian females (sex), 4) Russian

females (death), 5) English males (sex), 6) English males (death), 7) English females (sex), and 8) English females (death). In the top five rankings of the Ranking task, the largest variation was found in the results for sex. For all informants the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE sex terms ranked highly in the top five in the INFORMAL situation, while they dropped to a negligible presence in the FORMAL situation. Independent of language or gender, all informants preferred NEUTRAL and STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED sex terms to the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms as their top word choices in the FORMAL situation. The informants, therefore, avoid taboo terms when they use could cause embarrassment to the speaker, i.e., in FORMAL situations. In contrast, the top five rankings of the death terms showed little variation between the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. However, unlike for the topic of sex where the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms ranked highly in the INFORMAL situation, the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE death terms were not highly ranked in either situation.

The frequency of use also showed similar trends. The NEUTRAL and STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED sex terms increased in use for all informants in the FORMAL situation. (One exception to note is that the English females ranked the NEUTRAL terms slightly lower in the FORMAL situation.) Apart from the Russian females, all informants ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms as having a higher frequency of use in the INFORMAL situation than the FORMAL situation. For the Russian females, however, the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were ranked *rarely* for use in both situations. The results for death

were again very consistent between the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. This data suggests that the frequency of use of the various death terms was not influenced by the formality of the situation, whereas for the sex terms the formality of the situation influenced the use of all three categories.

For the topic of death, the levels of offensiveness of the terms remained fairly constant in the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations. Only for the topic of sex were the levels of offensiveness higher in the FORMAL situation. For the death terms, the offensiveness of a term seems to be perceived independently of the situation, while for the sex terms the perception of offensiveness is influenced by the situation. While there were some overall consistencies found in the results between the INFORMAL AND FORMAL situations, the topic of sex resulted in more variation than did the topic of death.

### 4.2 Males Vs. Females

The male vs. female comparisons totaled six in number: 1) Russian males vs. females (sex); 2) Russian males vs. females (death); 3) English males vs. females (sex); 4) English males vs. females (death); 5) males vs. females (sex); and 6) males vs. females (death). In general, the results were very similar for both topics, although some differences did appear in the language-specific comparisons.

For the rankings of the Ranking task on the topic of sex, only two differences are worthy of note here. In the Russian male vs. female comparison, the males ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms in the top

five with noticeably more frequency than the females ranked them. In the English male vs. female comparison, the females ranked the NEUTRAL terms in the top five with much higher frequency than the males did. These differences seem to average out in the overall male vs. female comparison, as those results showed little difference between the genders. However, the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms were still ranked in the top five with more frequency by the males than the females.

In all three male vs. female comparisons on the topic of death, the top five rankings showed very little variation. The largest difference is found in the English male vs. female comparison, where the females ranked the NEUTRAL terms with a slightly higher frequency than the males did. These results suggest that gender does not influence the top word choices for death, whereas it does influence the top choices for sex to some degree.

The frequency of use results are also similar for both the males and females. For the sex terms, the Russian males used all three categories with a higher frequency than the Russian females did, although the general pattern of use remained similar. Both the English results and the overall results showed fairly equal frequencies of use for each category of terms. This statement also holds true for the death results. The largest variation again occurs in the Russian male vs. female comparison, where the males used the NEUTRAL death terms with a noticeably higher frequency than the females did, while the English and the overall results remained fairly consistent.

The results for the levels of offensiveness remained unchanging in the

Russian, the English, and the overall male vs. female comparisons for both the sex and the death terms. The largest contrasts were found in the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms; in the English comparison the females ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE sex terms as more offensive than the males did, and in the Russian comparison the males ranked the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE death terms as more offensive than the females did. However, in general we may conclude that the offensiveness of a term is perceived independently of gender.

Although we have seen many similarities in the male vs. female results, the most obvious differences are found in the topic of sex. This can possibly be explained by the fact that death is a universal concept, a similar experience regardless of gender. Sex, on the other hand, is treated by society as a much more gender-related topic. Books expounding on the sex differences of the genders sell millions of copies, magazines plaster their front covers with articles on sex for both *him* and *her*, all reinforcing society's belief that, when it comes to sex, men and women are different. While the differences in the sex results here are possibly a result of such societal beliefs, perhaps the similarities underscore the universality of sex for both males and females.

### 4.3 Russian Vs. English

There were only two Russian vs. English comparisons included in this study, Russian vs. English (sex) and Russian vs. English (death). The sex results showed some variation between the speakers of the two languages.

The English-speaking informants ranked the NEUTRAL sex terms in the top five with a higher frequency than the Russian-speaking informants ranked them. The English also rated their usage of NEUTRAL sex terms at a higher frequency. These results seem to indicate that English speakers are more inclined to use NEUTRAL sex terms than the Russian speakers are in general. The other noticeable difference occurred in the ranking of offensiveness. The Russian speakers ranked all three categories at a higher level of offensiveness than the English speakers did. As noted previously, it is unclear to what extent this difference is related to language or to culture. All other results in this comparison did not show any noticeable differences.

For the topic of death, the results are again similar between the language groups. There are only a few differences to note here. In the top five rankings, the English speakers ranked the STYLISTICALLY-COLOURED terms more frequently than the Russian speakers did. In the Frequency task, the Russian speakers used the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms with a higher frequency than the English speakers did, although both language groups rated these terms as *rarely*, or *rarely* to *never* used. The Russian speakers again ranked all three categories of terms at a higher level of offensiveness, although the differences were especially marked in the NEUTRAL and the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE categories.

Apart from the offensiveness ratings, there were no overall differences in the results between the English and the Russian speakers. Sex and death are universal concepts, part of life for both Russian and English speakers, while the

perception of offensiveness is not as universal, being tied in various respects to language and culture.

### 4.4 Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were stated in the *Aim of the Study* section; at this point we will determine whether or not they were supported by the results.

Hypothesis (1): *Female speakers are more inclined than male speakers to avoid taboo words and phrases, when discussing the subjects of sex and death.* This hypothesis was not supported. Males and females avoided taboo words and phrases at the same frequency, when discussing the subjects of sex and death.

Hypothesis (2): *Female speakers are likely to find the use of such taboo words and phrases more offensive than male speakers are.* This hypothesis was also not supported. While the females found the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE sex terms slightly more offensive than the males did, the males found the PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE death terms slightly more offensive than the females did. Despite these differences, the results were nevertheless strikingly similar.

Hypothesis (3): *Both male and female speakers are more likely to use taboo words in informal rather than formal situations.* This hypothesis was

supported. In all comparisons (apart from the Russian female INFORMAL vs. FORMAL comparison for sex, as previously noted), the male and female informants were both more likely to use taboo words in the INFORMAL situation than the FORMAL situation.

Hypothesis (4): *Both male and female speakers are likely to find the use of taboo words less offensive in informal rather than formal situations.* This hypothesis was supported for the sex terms, but not for the death terms. There were some differences in the levels of offensiveness of the sex terms between the INFORMAL AND FORMAL situations, while the levels of offensiveness of the death terms remained fairly constant.

It was also noted that no general hypotheses concerning Russian and English speakers had been predetermined, as taboos are universal and the results should therefore be similar for the two language groups. The results indeed were similar, supporting the universality of the taboos.

### 4.5 Suggestions For Future Research

Because the number of informants returning completed surveys in this study was so low (twenty-six out of eighty-two), the results could not be statistically analyzed. For future research I would suggest surveying a larger group in order to quantify the differences between INFORMAL and FORMAL situations, between males and females, and between Russian and English

speakers. The patterns and tendencies found in this study would therefore be replaced with verifiable statistics. With such analysis, for example, we would be able to determine the percentage by which Russian females find PEJORATIVE AND OBSCENE terms more offensive in FORMAL situations than in INFORMAL situations. Another suggestion for future research is to pay attention to the semantic differences among the terms, in order to determine the effect that semantics may have on the results. I would also recommend extending the topics of the survey. For example, for the topic of death the person (or animal) who has died can be specified - a grandparent, a pet, a universally-loathed dictator, or a rat - in order to determine what effect the person or animal named has on the informant's use of euphemisms and taboo words. Finally, it would be interesting to determine the effect that other addressees in both the INFORMAL and FORMAL situations may have, such as friends vs. parents.

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## APPENDIX A

This appendix consists of the survey instrument for the male Russian-speaking informants. Three other versions were also produced, one for the female Russian-speaking informants, one for the male English-speaking informants, and one for the female English-speaking informants. All surveys were identical in layout. The situations varied slightly according to the gender of the informants, as explained throughout the analyses. Comprehensive lists of both the English and the Russian terms used in the surveys can be found in Appendix B.

## Instructions

This survey includes three information pages:

- Instructions
- Form of Consent
- Background Information Questionnaire

The *Form of Consent* as well as the *Background Information Questionnaire* must both be filled out in order for your responses to be included in the data.

The survey portion consists of four sections of four pages each, for a total of sixteen pages. The survey should take approximately 30 to 60 minutes to complete. Read the situation and instructions on each page carefully before answering. Although they may seem similar, each page is asking you to do something different. Complete the pages in the order that they are given. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me for clarification.

Please call or e-mail me to arrange a pick-up of the completed survey, unless otherwise arranged.

Thank you for your participation.

Carole Greene

## Form of Consent

Title: Use of Euphemisms by Speakers of Russian and English
Researcher: Carole Greene

You are under no obligation to participate in this survey, and you may withdraw at any stage. Your name will never be quoted in any publications. Access to the survey responses will be restricted to myself and my advisor, Dr. Tom Priestly.

I, _____(please print), understand and agree to the above statements.

_____ _____
Signature Date

## Background Information Questionnaire

Name: _____

Contact number/e-mail address: _____

Sex: M _____ F _____

Date of Birth (day, month, year): _____

Place of Birth: _____

If you were not born in Canada, when did you move to Canada: _____

***Languages:***

First language: _____

Evaluate your fluency in your first language: (circle the appropriate number)

**1** = perfect; **2** = very good; **3** = functional; **4** = minimal; **5** = no knowledge

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Listening Comprehension** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Reading** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Speaking** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Writing** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

If English is not your first language, evaluate your fluency in English: (circle the appropriate number)

**1** = perfect; **2** = very good; **3** = functional; **4** = minimal; **5** = no knowledge

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Listening Comprehension** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Reading** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Speaking** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Writing** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Other languages you have studied:

_____ _____

Language No. of Years

_____ _____

Language No. of Years

What language do you use: (leave blank if not applicable)

**at home:** _____

what percentage of the time do you use that language at home: _____

**with friends:** _____

what percentage of the time do you use that language with friends: _____

**at school:** _____

what percentage of the time do you use that language at school: _____

**at work:** _____

what percentage of the time do you use that language at work: _____

## PART A

**Situation**: You are speaking to a good male friend in a cafe. You are enjoying a nice cup of coffee and some friendly conversation. After a change of topic, the two of you begin to discuss a recent ***sexual encounter*** that took place between a man and a woman that you both know.

**Section 1**: **Sex Terms.** Please add any terms that may not be included in the list, but which you would use in the above situation when referring to people having sex. Add as many terms as you like. Use the backside of this page if necessary.

1) занимались сексом
2) чпокнули
3) зафакились
4) были в любовной связи
5) перепихнулись
6) подмахивали
7) завели роман
8) ебались
9) побарались
10) сожительствовали
11) занимались любовью
12) поблядовали
13) загнали дурака под кожу
14) слились в экстазе
15) предавались любви
16) посношались
17) добивались физической близости
18) потрахались
19) толкались

**Add your terms here:**

20) _____
21) _____
22) _____
23) _____
24) _____
25) _____

**Situation**: You are speaking to a good male friend in a cafe. You are enjoying a nice cup of coffee and some friendly conversation. After a change of topic, the two of you begin to discuss a recent ***sexual encounter*** that took place between a man and a woman that you both know.

**Section 2**: **Ranking.** Please rank each word or phrase in order of your usage according to the above situation, with 1 being the word or phrase you most frequently use. Include in the rankings any words or phrases you added in Section 1. For example, if you have 18 words in your list, you should rank them from 1(most frequently used) to 18 (least frequently used).

| **Rank:** | **Words/Phrases:** |
|---|---|
| _____ | занимались сексом |
| _____ | чпокнули |
| _____ | зафакились |
| _____ | были в любовной связи |
| _____ | перепихнулись |
| _____ | подмахивали |
| _____ | завели роман |
| _____ | ебались |
| _____ | побарались |
| _____ | сожительствовали |
| _____ | занимались любовью |
| _____ | поблядовали |
| _____ | загнали дурака под кожу |
| _____ | слились в экстазе |
| _____ | предавались любви |
| _____ | посношались |
| _____ | добивались физической близости |
| _____ | потрахались |
| _____ | толкались |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Situation**: You are speaking to a good male friend in a cafe. You are enjoying a nice cup of coffee and some friendly conversation. After a change of topic, the two of you begin to discuss a recent ***sexual encounter*** that took place between a man and a woman that you both know.

**Section 3: Frequency of Use.** Please circle the number on the scale below which corresponds to the frequency with which you would use the given word or phrase in the above situation. Include in your evaluation any words or phrases you added in Section 1.

**1** = always; **2** = often; **3** = sometimes; **4** = rarely; **5** = never

| **Words/Phrases:** | **Evaluation:** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| занимались сексом | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| чпокнули | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| зафакились | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| были в любовной связи | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| перепихнулись | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| подмахивали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| завели роман | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ебались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| побарались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сожительствовали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| занимались любовью | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| поблядовали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| загнали дурака под кожу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| слились в экстазе | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| предавались любви | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| посношались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| добивались физической близости | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| потрахались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| толкались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Situation**: You are speaking to a good male friend in a cafe. You are enjoying a nice cup of coffee and some friendly conversation. After a change of topic, the two of you begin to discuss a recent ***sexual encounter*** that took place between a man and a woman that you both know.

**Section 4: Level of Offensiveness.** Do you think this word or phrase is offensive? Please circle your response for each word or phrase according to the above situation. Include in your evaluation any words or phrases you added in Section 1.

**1** = no way; **2** = not likely; **3** = in between; **4** = probably; **5** = definitely

| **Words/Phrases:** | **Evaluation:** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| занимались сексом | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| чпокнули | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| зафакились | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| были в любовной связи | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| перепихнулись | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| подмахивали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| завели роман | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ебались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| побарались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сожительствовали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| занимались любовью | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| поблядовали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| загнали дурака под кожу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| слились в экстазе | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| предавались любви | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| посношались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| добивались физической близости | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| потрахались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| толкались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## PART B

**Situation**: You are speaking to a male doctor while at your yearly physical examination. The two of you are sitting in the office, discussing health in general. As a person who likes to understand medical concerns, you begin to discuss the act of ***sex*** between a man and a woman.

**Section 1**: **Sex Terms.** Please add any terms that may not be included in the list, but which you would use in the above situation when referring to people having sex. Add as many terms as you like. Use the backside of this page if necessary.

1) занимались сексом
2) чпокнули
3) зафакились
4) были в любовной связи
5) перепихнулись
6) подмахивали
7) завели роман
8) ебались
9) побарались
10) сожительствовали
11) занимались любовью
12) поблядовали
13) загнали дурака под кожу
14) слились в экстазе
15) предавались любви
16) посношались
17) добивались физической близости
18) потрахались
19) толкались

**Add your terms here:**

20) _____
21) _____
22) _____
23) _____
24) _____
25) _____

**Situation**: You are speaking to a male doctor while at your yearly physical examination. The two of you are sitting in the office, discussing health in general. As a person who likes to understand medical concerns, you begin to discuss the act of ***sex*** between a man and a woman.

**Section 2**: **Ranking.** Please rank each word or phrase in order of your usage according to the above situation, with 1 being the word or phrase you most frequently use. Include in the rankings any words or phrases you added in Section 1. For example, if you have 18 words in your list, you should rank them from 1(most frequently used) to 18 (least frequently used).

| Rank: | Words/Phrases: |
|---|---|
| _____ | занимались сексом |
| _____ | чпокнули |
| _____ | зафакились |
| _____ | были в любовной связи |
| _____ | перепихнулись |
| _____ | подмахивали |
| _____ | завели роман |
| _____ | ебались |
| _____ | побарались |
| _____ | сожительствовали |
| _____ | занимались любовью |
| _____ | поблядовали |
| _____ | загнали дурака под кожу |
| _____ | слились в экстазе |
| _____ | предавались любви |
| _____ | посношались |
| _____ | добивались физической близости |
| _____ | потрахались |
| _____ | толкались |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Situation**: You are speaking to a male doctor while at your yearly physical examination. The two of you are sitting in the office, discussing health in general. As a person who likes to understand medical concerns, you begin to discuss the act of ***sex*** between a man and a woman.

**Section 3**: **Frequency of Use.** Please circle the number on the scale below which corresponds to the frequency with which you would use the given word or phrase in the above situation. Include in your evaluation any words or phrases you added in Section 1.

**1** = always; **2** = often; **3** = sometimes; **4** = rarely; **5** = never

| **Words/Phrases:** | **Evaluation:** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| занимались сексом | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| чпокнули | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| зафакились | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| были в любовной связи | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| перепихнулись | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| подмахивали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| завели роман | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ебались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| побарались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сожительствовали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| занимались любовью | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| поблядовали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| загнали дурака под кожу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| слились в экстазе | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| предавались любви | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| посношались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| добивались физической близости | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| потрахались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| толкались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Situation**: You are speaking to a male doctor while at your yearly physical examination. The two of you are sitting in the office, discussing health in general. As a person who likes to understand medical concerns, you begin to discuss the act of ***sex*** between a man and a woman.

**Section 4**: **Level of Offensiveness.** Do you think this word or phrase is offensive? Please circle your response for each word or phrase according to the above situation. Include in your evaluation any words or phrases you added in Section 1.

**1** = no way; **2** = not likely; **3** = in between; **4** = probably; **5** = definitely

| **Words/Phrases:** | **Evaluation:** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| занимались сексом | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| чпокнули | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| зафакились | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| были в любовной связи | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| перепихнулись | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| подмахивали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| завели роман | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ебались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| побарались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сожительствовали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| занимались любовью | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| поблядовали | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| загнали дурака под кожу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| слились в экстазе | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| предавались любви | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| посношались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| добивались физической близости | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| потрахались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| толкались | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## PART C

**Situation**: You are speaking to a good male friend in a cafe. You are enjoying a nice cup of coffee and some friendly conversation. After a change of topic, the two of you begin to discuss the recent ***death*** of somebody you both know.

**Section 1**: **Death Terms.** Please add any terms that may not be included in the list, but which you would use in the above situation when referring to someone's death. Add as many terms as you like. Use the backside of this page if necessary.

1) гибнул(а)
2) отбросил(а) коньки
3) скончался (-лась)
4) уснул(а) навеки
5) отправился (-лась) на тот свет
6) свернулся (-лась)
7) умер(ла)
8) сдохнул(а)
9) отдал(а) богу душу
10) сошел (-ла) в гроб
11) ушел (-ла) из жизни
12) прижмурился (-лась)
13) лег(ла) в могилу
14) нашел (-ла) свой конец
15) сыграл(а) в ящик
16) отбросил(а) копыта

**Add your terms here:**

17) _____
18) _____
19) _____
20) _____
21) _____
22) _____
23) _____
24) _____
25) _____

**Situation**: You are speaking to a good male friend in a cafe. You are enjoying a nice cup of coffee and some friendly conversation. After a change of topic, the two of you begin to discuss the recent ***death*** of somebody you both know.

**Section 2**: **Ranking.** Please rank each word or phrase in order of your usage according to the above situation, with 1 being the word or phrase you most frequently use. Include in the rankings any words or phrases you added in Section 1. For example, if you have 18 words in your list, you should rank them from 1(most frequently used) to 18 (least frequently used).

| **Rank:** | **Words/Phrases:** |
|---|---|
| _____ | гибнул(а) |
| _____ | отбросил(а) коньки |
| _____ | скончался (-лась) |
| _____ | уснул(а) навеки |
| _____ | отправился (-лась) на тот свет |
| _____ | свернулся (-лась) |
| _____ | умер(ла) |
| _____ | сдохнул(а) |
| _____ | отдал(а) богу душу |
| _____ | сошел (-ла) в гроб |
| _____ | ушел (-ла) из жизни |
| _____ | прижмурился (-лась) |
| _____ | лег(ла) в могилу |
| _____ | нашел (-ла) свой конец |
| _____ | сыграл(а) в ящик |
| _____ | отбросил(а) копыта |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Situation**: You are speaking to a good male friend in a cafe. You are enjoying a nice cup of coffee and some friendly conversation. After a change of topic, the two of you begin to discuss the recent ***death*** of somebody you both know.

**Section 3**: **Frequency of Use.** Please circle the number on the scale below which corresponds to the frequency with which you would use the given word or phrase in the above situation. Include in your evaluation any words or phrases you added in Section 1.

**1** = always; **2** = often; **3** = sometimes; **4** = rarely; **5** = never

| **Words/Phrases:** | **Evaluation:** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| гибнул(а) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отбросил(а) коньки | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| скончался (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| уснул(а) навеки | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отправился (-лась) на тот свет | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| свернулся (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| умер(ла) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сдохнул(а) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отдал(а) богу душу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сошел (-ла) в гроб | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ушел (-ла) из жизни | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| прижмурился (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| лег(ла) в могилу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| нашел (-ла) свой конец | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сыграл(а) в ящик | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отбросил(а) копыта | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Situation**: You are speaking to a good male friend in a cafe. You are enjoying a nice cup of coffee and some friendly conversation. After a change of topic, the two of you begin to discuss the recent ***death*** of somebody you both know.

**Section 4**: **Level of Offensiveness.** Do you think this word or phrase is offensive? Please circle your response for each word or phrase according to the above situation. Include in your evaluation any words or phrases you added in Section 1.

**1** = no way; **2** = not likely; **3** = in between; **4** = probably; **5** = definitely

| **Words/Phrases:** | **Evaluation:** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| гибнул(а) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отбросил(а) коньки | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| скончался (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| уснул(а) навеки | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отправился (-лась) на тот свет | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| свернулся (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| умер(ла) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сдохнул(а) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отдал(а) богу душу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сошел (-ла) в гроб | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ушел (-ла) из жизни | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| прижмурился (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| лег(ла) в могилу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| нашел (-ла) свой конец | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сыграл(а) в ящик | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отбросил(а) копыта | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## PART D

**Situation**: You are speaking to a male doctor while at your yearly physical examination. The two of you are sitting in the office, discussing health in general. As a person who likes to understand medical concerns, you begin to discuss the recent ***death*** of somebody you both know.

**Section 1**: **Death Terms.** Please add any terms that may not be included in the list, but which you would use in the above situation when referring to someone's death. Add as many terms as you like. Use the backside of this page if necessary.

1) гибнул(а)
2) отбросил(а) коньки
3) скончался (-лась)
4) уснул(а) навеки
5) отправился (-лась) на тот свет
6) свернулся (-лась)
7) умер(ла)
8) сдохнул(а)
9) отдал(а) богу душу
10) сошел (-ла) в гроб
11) ушел (-ла) из жизни
12) прижмурился (-лась)
13) лег(ла) в могилу
14) нашел (-ла) свой конец
15) сыграл(а) в ящик
16) отбросил(а) копыта

**Add your terms here:**

17) _____
18) _____
19) _____
20) _____
21) _____
22) _____
23) _____
24) _____
25) _____

**Situation**: You are speaking to a male doctor while at your yearly physical examination. The two of you are sitting in the office, discussing health in general. As a person who likes to understand medical concerns, you begin to discuss the recent ***death*** of somebody you both know.

**Section 2**: **Ranking.** Please rank each word or phrase in order of your usage according to the above situation, with 1 being the word or phrase you most frequently use. Include in the rankings any words or phrases you added in Section 1. For example, if you have 18 words in your list, you should rank them from 1(most frequently used) to 18 (least frequently used).

| **Rank:** | **Words/Phrases:** |
|---|---|
| _____ | гибнул(а) |
| _____ | отбросил(а) коньки |
| _____ | скончался (-лась) |
| _____ | уснул(а) навеки |
| _____ | отправился (-лась) на тот свет |
| _____ | свернулся (-лась) |
| _____ | умер(ла) |
| _____ | сдохнул(а) |
| _____ | отдал(а) богу душу |
| _____ | сошел (-ла) в гроб |
| _____ | ушел (-ла) из жизни |
| _____ | прижмурился (-лась) |
| _____ | лег(ла) в могилу |
| _____ | нашел (-ла) свой конец |
| _____ | сыграл(а) в ящик |
| _____ | отбросил(а) копыта |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Situation**: You are speaking to a male doctor while at your yearly physical examination. The two of you are sitting in the office, discussing health in general. As a person who likes to understand medical concerns, you begin to discuss the recent ***death*** of somebody you both know.

**Section 3**: **Frequency of Use.** Please circle the number on the scale below which corresponds to the frequency with which you would use the given word or phrase in the above situation. Include in your evaluation any words or phrases you added in Section 1.

**1** = always; **2** = often; **3** = sometimes; **4** = rarely; **5** = never

| **Words/Phrases:** | **Evaluation:** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| гибнул(а) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отбросил(а) коньки | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| скончался (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| уснул(а) навеки | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отправился (-лась) на тот свет | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| свернулся (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| умер(ла) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сдохнул(а) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отдал(а) богу душу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сошел (-ла) в гроб | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ушел (-ла) из жизни | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| прижмурился (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| лег(ла) в могилу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| нашел (-ла) свой конец | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сыграл(а) в ящик | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отбросил(а) копыта | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Situation**: You are speaking to a male doctor while at your yearly physical examination. The two of you are sitting in the office, discussing health in general. As a person who likes to understand medical concerns, you begin to discuss the recent ***death*** of somebody you both know.

**Section 4**: **Level of Offensiveness.** Do you think this word or phrase is offensive? Please circle your response for each word or phrase according to the above situation. Include in your evaluation any words or phrases you added in Section 1.

**1** = no way; **2** = not likely; **3** = in between; **4** = probably; **5** = definitely

| **Words/Phrases:** | **Evaluation:** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| гибнул(а) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отбросил(а) коньки | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| скончался (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| уснул(а) навеки | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отправился (-лась) на тот свет | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| свернулся (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| умер(ла) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сдохнул(а) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отдал(а) богу душу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сошел (-ла) в гроб | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| ушел (-ла) из жизни | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| прижмурился (-лась) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| лег(ла) в могилу | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| нашел (-ла) свой конец | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| сыграл(а) в ящик | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| отбросил(а) копыта | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## APPENDIX B

## RUSSIAN TERMS: SEX

*Neutral Terms*:

были в любовной связи
добивались физической близости
занимались сексом
сожительствовали

*Stylistically-Coloured Terms*:

загнали дурака под кожу
занимались любовью
завели роман
предавались любви
слились в экстазе

*Pejorative and Obscene Terms*:

ебались
зафакились
перепихнулись
побарались
поблядовали
подмахивали
посношались
потрахались
толкались
чпокнули

## RUSSIAN TERMS: DEATH

*Neutral Terms*:

гибнул(а)
скончался (-лась)
умер(ла)
ушел (-ла) из жизни

*Stylistically-Coloured Terms*:

лег(ла) в могилу
нашел (-ла) свой конец
отдал(а) богу душу
отправился (-лась) на тот свет
сошел (-ла) в гроб
уснул(а) навеки

*Pejorative and Obscene Terms*:

отбросил(а) коньки
отбросил(а) копыта
прижмурился (-лась)
сдохнул(а)
свернулся (-лась)
сыграл(а) в ящик

## ENGLISH TERMS: SEX

*Neutral Terms*:

did it
had sex
made love
slept together

*Stylistically-Coloured Terms*:

copulated
coupled
mated
performed the marriage act
were intimate

*Pejorative and Obscene Terms*:

balled
belly boxed
diddled
fornicated
fucked
got a leg over
got laid
knocked boots
screwed
shagged

## ENGLISH TERMS: DEATH

*Neutral Terms*:

died
lost his/her life
passed away
passed on

*Stylistically-Coloured Terms*:

ceased to exist
deceased
expired
gave up the ghost
is no more
met his/her end
met his/her Maker
passed out of the picture
perished
quit this world

*Pejorative and Obscene Terms*:

bit the dust
cashed in his/her chips
checked out
croaked
kicked the bucket
popped off
turned up his/her toes
up and died

## APPENDIX C

### FREQUENCY OF USE OF SEX TERMS BY RUSSIAN MALE SPEAKERS (informal & formal combined)

| term: | frequency: |
|---|---|
| занимались сексом | 2.0 |
| занимались любовью | 2.3 |
| потрахались | 2.5 |
| были в любовной связи | 2.8 |
| ебались | 2.8 |
| завели роман | 3.2 |
| перепихнулись | 3.3 |
| посношались | 3.3 |
| сожительствовали | 3.5 |
| поблядовали | 3.5 |
| добивались физической близости | 3.7 |
| подмахивали | 3.7 |
| загнали дурака под кожу | 3.8 |
| толкались | 3.8 |
| предавались любви | 4.0 |
| слились в экстазе | 4.0 |
| чпокнули | 4.0 |
| зафакились | 4.3 |
| побарались | 4.3 |

FREQUENCY OF USE OF SEX TERMS
BY RUSSIAN FEMALE SPEAKERS
(informal & formal combined)

| term: | frequency: |
|---|---|
| занимались сексом | 1.8 |
| ебались | 3.2 |
| сожительствовали | 3.5 |
| занимались любовью | 3.6 |
| были в любовной связи | 3.7 |
| добивались физической близости | 3.7 |
| загнали дурака под кожу | 3.8 |
| поблядовали | 3.8 |
| потрахались | 3.8 |
| завели роман | 4.0 |
| зафакились | 4.0 |
| перепихнулись | 4.0 |
| побарались | 4.0 |
| подмахивали | 4.0 |
| чпокнули | 4.1 |
| посношались | 4.2 |
| толкались | 4.2 |
| предавались любви | 4.3 |
| слились в экстазе | 4.3 |

FREQUENCY OF USE OF DEATH TERMS
BY RUSSIAN MALE SPEAKERS
(informal & formal combined)

| term: | frequency: |
|---|---|
| умер(ла) | 1.0 |
| гибнул(а) | 1.3 |
| скончался (-лась) | 2.2 |
| ушел (-ла) из жизни | 3.0 |
| отбросил(а) коньки | 3.7 |
| отдал(а) богу душу | 3.7 |
| отправился (-лась) на тот свет | 3.7 |
| нашел (-ла) свой конец | 3.8 |
| прижмурился (-лась) | 3.8 |
| свернулся (-лась) | 3.8 |
| сыграл(а) в ящик | 3.8 |
| лег(ла) в могилу | 4.0 |
| отбросил(а) копыта | 4.0 |
| сдохнул(а) | 4.0 |
| сошел (-ла) в гроб | 4.0 |
| уснул(а) навеки | 4.2 |

FREQUENCY OF USE OF DEATH TERMS
BY RUSSIAN FEMALE SPEAKERS
(informal & formal combined)

| term: | frequency: |
|---|---|
| умер(ла) | 1.4 |
| гибнул(а) | 2.0 |
| скончался (-лась) | 2.6 |
| отправился (-лась) на тот свет | 3.4 |
| сдохнул(а) | 3.4 |
| ушел (-ла) из жизни | 3.4 |
| нашел (-ла) свой конец | 3.5 |
| лег(ла) в могилу | 3.6 |
| отдал(а) богу душу | 3.6 |
| отбросил(а) коньки | 3.8 |
| прижмурился (-лась) | 3.8 |
| свернулся (-лась) | 3.8 |
| сошел (-ла) в гроб | 3.8 |
| сыграл(а) в ящик | 3.8 |
| уснул(а) навеки | 3.8 |
| отбросил(а) копыта | 3.9 |

FREQUENCY OF USE OF SEX TERMS
BY ENGLISH MALE SPEAKERS
(informal & formal combined)

| term: | frequency: |
|---|---|
| had sex | 1.5 |
| slept together | 1.9 |
| did it | 2.9 |
| got laid | 3.0 |
| made love | 3.0 |
| screwed | 3.1 |
| were intimate | 3.1 |
| shagged | 3.6 |
| fucked | 3.8 |
| coupled | 4.0 |
| mated | 4.1 |
| balled | 4.4 |
| copulated | 4.4 |
| fornicated | 4.4 |
| diddled | 4.5 |
| performed the marriage act | 4.5 |
| got a leg over | 4.6 |
| knocked boots | 4.6 |
| belly boxed | 4.8 |

FREQUENCY OF USE OF SEX TERMS
BY ENGLISH FEMALE SPEAKERS
(informal & formal combined)

| term: | frequency: |
|---|---|
| had sex | 1.5 |
| slept together | 1.6 |
| did it | 2.5 |
| were intimate | 2.7 |
| made love | 2.8 |
| got laid | 3.4 |
| screwed | 3.7 |
| fucked | 3.8 |
| mated | 4.0 |
| shagged | 4.0 |
| copulated | 4.2 |
| coupled | 4.3 |
| fornicated | 4.4 |
| performed the marriage act | 4.5 |
| diddled | 4.6 |
| knocked boots | 4.6 |
| balled | 4.8 |
| got a leg over | 4.8 |
| belly boxed | 4.9 |

FREQUENCY OF USE OF DEATH TERMS
BY ENGLISH MALE SPEAKERS
(informal & formal combined)

| term: | frequency: |
|---|---|
| died | 1.6 |
| passed away | 1.8 |
| deceased | 2.8 |
| passed on | 2.8 |
| lost his/her life | 2.9 |
| perished | 3.3 |
| ceased to exist | 3.6 |
| expired | 3.8 |
| is no more | 3.8 |
| bit the dust | 4.3 |
| kicked the bucket | 4.3 |
| cashed in his/her chips | 4.4 |
| checked out | 4.4 |
| met his/her end | 4.4 |
| up and died | 4.4 |
| croaked | 4.5 |
| met his/her Maker | 4.8 |
| quit this world | 4.8 |
| gave up the ghost | 4.9 |
| passed out of the picture | 4.9 |
| popped off | 4.9 |
| turned up his/her toes | 5.0 |

FREQUENCY OF USE OF DEATH TERMS
BY ENGLISH FEMALE SPEAKERS
(informal & formal combined)

| term: | frequency: |
|---|---|
| passed away | 1.3 |
| died | 1.4 |
| passed on | 2.2 |
| deceased | 2.3 |
| lost his/her life | 2.8 |
| perished | 3.4 |
| met his/her end | 3.8 |
| croaked | 3.9 |
| ceased to exist | 4.0 |
| expired | 4.0 |
| up and died | 4.0 |
| is no more | 4.1 |
| kicked the bucket | 4.1 |
| bit the dust | 4.2 |
| quit this world | 4.4 |
| checked out | 4.5 |
| passed out of the picture | 4.5 |
| gave up the ghost | 4.6 |
| met his/her Maker | 4.6 |
| turned up his/her toes | 4.6 |
| cashed in his/her chips | 4.7 |
| popped off | 4.7 |